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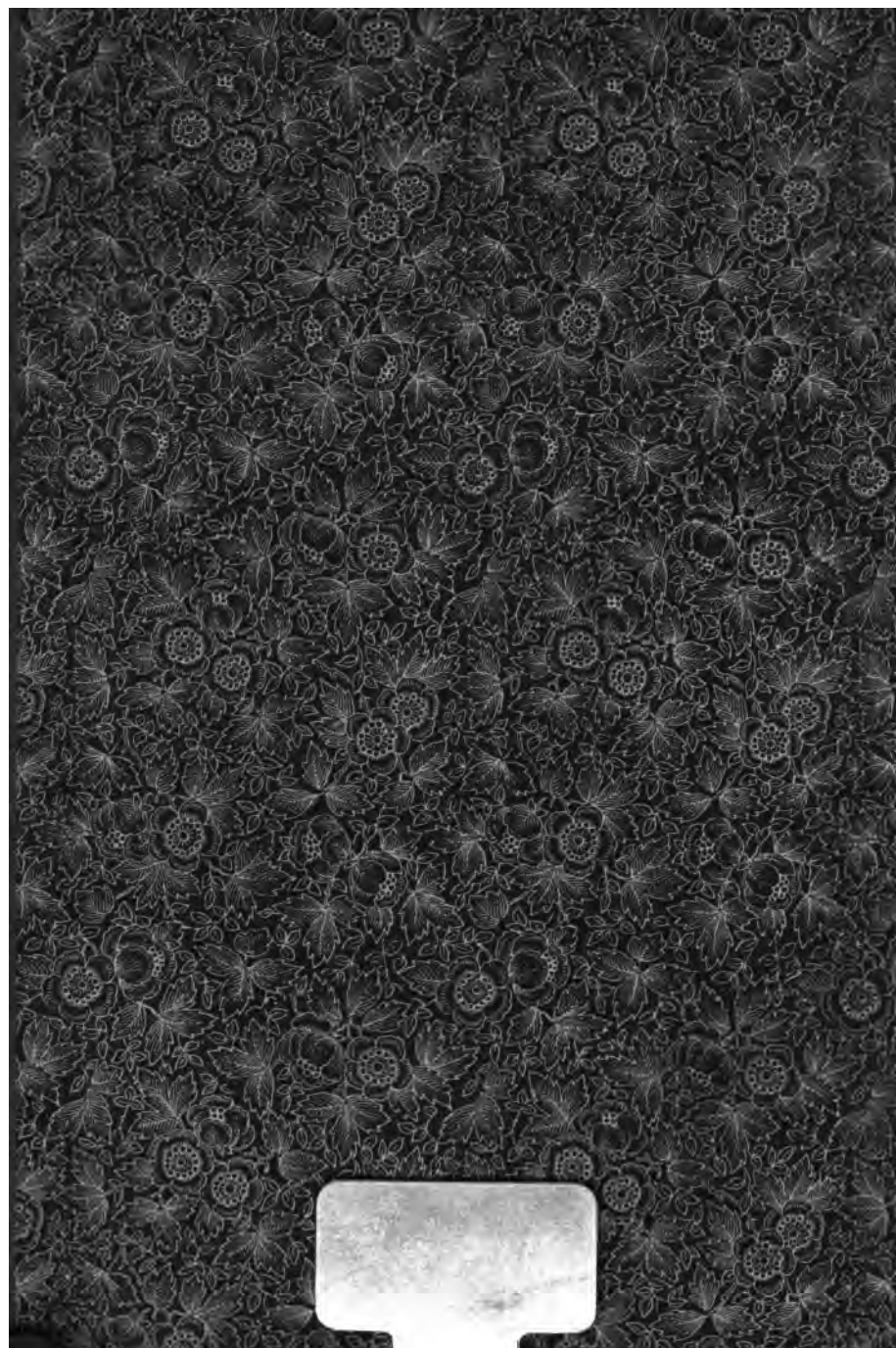
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DARCY AND FRIENDS

—  
JOSEPH M<sup>C</sup>KIM, BA









# DARCY AND FRIENDS.

An Irish Tale.

"Soyez vif et pressé dans vos narrations."

BY  
JOSEPH MCKIM, B.A.



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# DARCY AND FRIENDS.



## CHAPTER I.

### BOYHOOD.

'We stood upon the verge of a great sea,  
The wind sang in the hollows of our sails.'

ALEXANDER SMITH.

I KNOW not whether the reader has ever, in these days of holidays and excursions, visited the village of Colondil in the west of Ireland. It stands at the junction of two rivers, on slightly rising ground, with mountains hanging over it on one side, and a finely wooded hill watching over it on another. The railway has opened up the fertile country around, and, as a consequence, stage-coaches are there a thing of the past. The boom of the ocean can sometimes be heard when the wind blows in a certain direction and when the weather is rough. It is a small village, not having more than six hundred or seven hundred of a population. Some of these are engaged in corn mills in the neighbourhood, while the majority gain a precarious living from agriculture. The inhabitants are ever ready to tell the occasional traveller who stays

there the history of their village in times past. They can tell how Cromwell ravaged the land, or how James' French auxiliaries were beaten, and how they wandered through the country, till, worn out with travelling, they lay down and died far from friends and home. Like a good many historians, they draw largely on their own imaginations for the colouring of their narratives. In fact, they like nothing better than to astonish any stranger by their stories of war, ghosts, fairies, Fenians, and a host of other fearful things which can be summoned at pleasure.

Should the tourist ask what is to be seen in the neighbourhood, he is certain to be directed to Balloghmore House, which is about two and a half miles from the village; one and a half miles of the way lie within the walls of the demesne attached to the house. The avenue passes through grounds tastefully laid out and well stocked with game. The house itself is a massive building, square and solemn-looking, without much beauty. Large stables belonging to it a few hundred yards off are also shown to the visitor.

The house and stables are in excellent condition, being kept well and cleanly by a few servants, who live on the premises, and have nothing else to do. The traveller would naturally ask who lived in the house, and he would get the rather puzzling reply that no one lived in it. He might further ask whether the family were living abroad, but to this also the reply would be, 'No.' After asking several more questions which he thinks might solve the difficulty, and finding himself as far from a satisfactory solution as ever, he may imagine, with some show of reason, that the caretaker or servant to

whom he is talking is calmly enjoying his discomfiture. Having got this idea into his head, he may grow somewhat testy, and demand with warmth, 'What on earth, then, are you keeping the place like this for?'

This being probably the first question actually to the point, a corresponding answer is given: 'Sure the miss-thress is comin' to live here some day.'

'The mistress! When is she coming?'

'Maybe in tin years' time, an' maybe in fifteen.'

'Is she married?'

'Not she.'

'Is she old?'

'Not she.'

'Does she live in France?'

'No.'

'Italy?'

'No.'

'America?'

'No.'

'Where does she live then?'

'About five or six miles from here.'

'Has she another house there?'

'No, she hasn't.'

'With whom does she live?'

'Wid a frind, av coorse!'

'Why does she live there?'

'Arrah! sure she's only a weeshe bit av a child, an how could she live anywhere else?'

The tourist having wormed this much information out of his guide, naturally feels inclined to get some more.

'Has she a father, and has she a mother?'

'No.'

How comes it she is left thus, with riches ready made for her certainly, but without those nearest and dearest friends, without whom the path of life, however smooth at the start, becomes rough? Where is the father's kiss? the mother's embrace? Why are they not here to watch over her youth? Such thoughts, turning themselves in all sorts of ways, may occupy the tourist's mind so much, that a sleepless night may be the consequence, especially if he be of an imaginative turn of mind.

Could the traveller antedate his visit to Balloghmore House by a score and a half of years, he would probably have seen a boy, John Darcy by name, amusing himself somewhere in the grounds. He could oftenest be found navigating a plank, on which he stood, from one side of a large pond to the other. This is a feat which requires some skill, and young Darcy, not always having a stock of that, frequently slipped off the plank into the pond. On such occasions he could be seen calmly swimming or wading to the side, pushing the plank before him. Having gained the side, he would embark on his slippery craft once more, and try to cross. If he succeeded, he seemed satisfied, and went away to dry his clothes, singing or whistling merrily. At other times he could be seen with another boy, a few years older than himself, trying to catch a black donkey in a small field or paddock near the house. This boy was the son of an old servant of the house.

The two boys would steal quietly behind the animal, but the latter generally heard their approach, and only waited, as it seemed, to delude them with the hope of a capture; for no sooner did they come very near, than the donkey, pitching his heels into the air in derision,

would rush off to another part of the field. Sometimes all their wiles were in vain, but occasionally the donkey, out of pure compassion for them, would allow itself to be caught, and would look at them as much as to say, 'Well, here I am! what next?'

'Hold him, Tom!' Darcy would shout to his companion. 'Hold his head up till I am on.'

'All right, sur!' Tom would reply.

No sooner was Darcy on, than Tom would rush away from the donkey's head; for he had learned from painful experience that his first movement was to spin right round and strike out with his heels. His next movement was to put his head between his forelegs and send his heels to the stars. This movement often sent Darcy to the ground, but in time he could resist even this. The donkey's third strategy was to dart off at a rapid pace, and then suddenly to stop and use his heels as before. If Darcy held his seat after this manoeuvre, Tom's admiration was always loudly expressed. The donkey, however, had something else in store, when all other means failed in getting his rider off, and that was to lie down and roll over him. When it came to that, Darcy was forced to jump off. Neither he nor Tom thought such conduct right in the donkey, for Tom was wont on such occasions to call him a 'dirty mane baste,' and Darcy quite agreed to think him so.

These examples will serve to show the direction young Darcy's amusements took. They were certainly of a nature to cause injury to limbs and to knock features out of shape, but somehow or other none of the results which we might justly anticipate followed. His amusements were often put an end to for the time by the

appearance of his uncle, a middle-aged gentleman, who looked, however, much older than his years. His uncle was, in his heart of hearts, proud of the pluck of the young 'devil,' as he fondly called his nephew, so that when his head appeared through the bushes imprecating his nephew, his face and voice told the tale that he would much rather have said 'Bravo!' He felt, however, that he had a responsibility resting on him with regard to his nephew, and he was determined not to shirk it. His brother, dying a few years before, left him the charge of his only son, and now he was trying to do his duty to the dead.

Many a heartache it cost him to scold his nephew, but it had to be done, he thought, and he went bravely through it. Could he have known what Darcy felt about these scoldings, he would not have been so self-accusing. The boy saw clearly that his uncle was kindness itself, and he endured his punishment without any remonstrance or grumbling.

Several times, indeed, he had vowed to give up his amusements when he fancied that they really grieved the old gentleman; but the spirit of boyhood is strong, and a word from Tom, or a twinkle in the old man's eye as he recited some of his own adventures, set the boy free once more.

At times, however, for days together, he was quietness itself. In vain Tom reminded him that the donkey looked insultingly at them as they passed, in vain the pond invited, in vain the jackdaws screamed on the chimneys. He would touch none of them. Buried in books in the library, or wandering aimlessly through the woods he found pleasure. Sometimes he took Tom with

him, and at the foot of a tree read to him the passages which had stirred his youthful soul ; but these readings generally ended in disappointment. He expected to see Tom's eyes flash and his breath come short, as he read of some heroic deed in ages past ; but instead, Tom generally gave a sigh of relief when the reading was over, and suggested that they should catch the donkey now, or trap some rabbits, or do-something else equally repugnant to Darcy's feelings at the time.

Darcy's mother had died in giving birth to him. No likeness of her had been taken—indeed, she never would suffer it to be taken—so that her face was unknown to her only son. She was not, however, forgotten by him. Many an hour he spent in dreamy questioning as to what she was like. His nurse had filled his mind with vague ideas of her beauty, and his own imagination, in a hazy sort of way, added to it, and formed a face with gentle pitying eyes, that he loved to let look upon him.

Under huge trees the beautiful image came when he lay on his back, shaded by the branches ; or in the house, as he read, the book was often dropped as he closed his eyes, and lay back to dream of her. Thus living his life in books, in dreams, and in rough physical exercises, the boy grew in stature.

His education during these years was entrusted to a gentleman of some learning who kept a school in the neighbouring town. He gave him a few hours' tuition each day, and filled his mind with facts enough to please any of our modern school-board visitors.

As Tom grew older, he began to visit the dances, wakes, and other amusements common in that part of Ireland. As a matter of course, he told his young

master all about them, and thus created in him a desire to visit them. And many a night, when Darcy's uncle thought that he slept peacefully overhead—having silenced the servants either by bribes or threats—he would steal forth, and take his part in the gaiety. Tom gathered information respecting the times and places of these meetings, and had it in readiness for his young master whenever the latter felt inclined to amuse himself.

It would require one far older and less credulous than Darcy not to be flattered by the encomiums lavished on him on the occasions of such visits. When it was known that he was coming, no dancing was allowed till he should open the ball.

When he entered the house, he was met by showers of curtsseys, 'Good-night, yer honour,' 'Make room for his honour.' And then how envied the country girl was with whom he deigned to have the first dance! and how the old women sitting round the walls joined in with their compliments!

'Och, dhin, hasn't he the purty eyes!' one would exclaim.

'Throth, he's a fine gintleman, out-an-out!' another would reply.

'May God Almighty bless yer honour!—shure it's you can welt the flure hansomely, and dance a jig with any gintleman in the county!' a third would join in.

And when he sat down on the only whole chair in the house after his dance he was met with,

'Arrah, dhin, take a dhrop, yer honour, it'll keep ye warm goin' home.'

And he, with vanity's assistance, would gulp down

the wretched concoction which on such occasions goes by the name of whisky. Then the long clay pipes would be brought in on a sieve or in a dish, and the Limerick twist, cut up and placed on a plate, handed round for each one to fill his pipe with it. Vanity again coming to Darcy's assistance, he would smoke his pipe with no apparent uneasiness, and try to join in the rough jests passed round.

And when the time came for Darcy to go, an expectant smile lit up the blind fiddler's face—a smile not to be disappointed, for Darcy always slipped a piece of gold into his hand, while murmurs of approval passed round the room at the liberality of the 'gintleman.'

'Throth, it's he that's the rale ould soort,' says one old dame in loud confidence. 'Faith, dhin, it's no won-dhur—sure his father before him had an open hand.'

'Look here, Shamus!' Mrs. Mulrooney, the owner of the house, exclaims to her husband. 'Take his honor home, an' if ye let a hair av his head be touched, I'll not lave a wisp on tap av yours.'

Shamus knew very well that his wife meant this from a business point of view, and he had not the slightest misgiving that his locks would be roughly handled, whether Darcy got safely home or not.

When Darcy had succeeded in forcing another piece of gold into Mrs. Mulrooney's hand, he went out in a shower of blessings, and Shamus, with a grin, to those left behind, followed him, and lit his way home with more flattery.

No sooner had Darcy left on such occasions than the blind fiddler was surrounded, and made to 'thrate' the company with what Darcy had given him, and he was

considered indeed fortunate if he carried anything home besides whisky to repay him for his night's fiddling.

When Darcy got home, invariably Tom would be waiting for him, and would admit him quietly, and then, having taken his boots off, both would creep secretly to bed.

The wakes which Darcy visited differed from the dances merely in the fact that, instead of dancing, a corpse was provided for the occasion, while the whisky, pipes, and mirth went on as before.

On some of these occasions the talk was of more serious matters. Here and there was one who gathered round him a few eager listeners. His subject was oppression; the wrongs of their race; the heroes of the past, who had died for the cause; and the bad landlords. Such men had the gift of eloquence, and easily persuaded the uncultured ones around them to think as they themselves professed to do.

Darcy often listened; and as anything heroic had great attraction for him, such speeches had a great effect in moulding his character. He delighted to get the old grandmothers in the hovels, to relate legends and tales of the past, till his young imagination glowed with zeal and fervour.

Darcy's uncle was the most unsuspicious of men, and never dreamt that his beloved nephew was doing anything improper. But now tales reached the old man's ears—tales which he could scarcely credit!—tales of the midnight excursions of his nephew! He resolved to put a stop to such conduct. Tender as were his feelings, and great as was his love, he could not tolerate this. His nephew! The son of his dead brother! The

owner of the largest property in the county to be spoiled thus! Impossible!

'Send up Mr. Darcy, Tom,' shouted the old gentleman; 'I'll teach him!' he continued to himself, as he paced about the room.

Tom told Darcy that the old gentleman was in a great rage about something or other; and the latter went upstairs with a slow step and a self-accusing voice in his ear, for he felt that he had not been acting a manly part.

Darcy arrived. 'Now, see here, nephew!' the uncle exclaimed, as soon as Darcy entered the room. 'We have had enough of this sort of life, you know—this vagabond life. You forget, sir—you forget,' said the old gentleman, winding himself up to a higher pitch, 'that your position demands more common sense from you than you can learn in this sort of way. I'm ashamed of you, sir; your conduct has been execrable! But I'll see to it in the future.'

No reply from Darcy, whose face was gradually gaining a defiant look.

'You shall have a tutor, sir—a tutor! Do you know what that is? One to teach you your duty, sir, and to see that you do it. I'm getting an old man, and cannot look after you as I would wish to do; but, for the sake of the dead I must make an effort.' Here the old man's voice shook in spite of himself. 'I must, indeed!' He broke down. Darcy rushed to his side in an instant, and threw his arms about his neck; the defiant look passed away as he sobbed:

'Oh, uncle, forgive me! I have been very dishonourable. Will you forgive me, uncle?'

'I am a fool—an old fool; but I can't help it. Am

I very cruel, nephew? Is it very hard to make you have a tutor?

‘Oh, never mind it, uncle: I shall like it, if it satisfies you.’

The old man stroked his hair. ‘Very well, my boy, that’s right. I could not rest till I had one. But I’ll get as good a one as I can; one who can ride with you and take an interest in your sports.’

The tutor was duly seen after; and the old man flattered himself that he had secured one who, while satisfying all the conditions that he himself required, would not prejudice Darcy against learning. In this he was right.

Darcy’s mind was at the time, thanks to its natural development, thirsting for information. In Mr. Martin he found a man who thoroughly understood his character. Ingeniously he would excite Darcy’s curiosity on some useful subject, without permitting him to see that that was the effect intended, and then he gave just enough information to make him eager for more.

As they rode together through Darcy’s demesne, the hoary oaks stretching their shrivelled arms athwart the path would raise the question, ‘Who planted them?—what a length of time they must have sentineled the park!—how many a Darcy that now lay still had passed under their branches!’

So the conversation would wander on, till at length it had touched the Druids on the one hand, with flowing beards and mystic air, performing their rites; and as they cut the mistletoe off the oak offering snowy bulls to their deity; on the other hand, it brought the ships and naval victories of England into prominence,

and by a natural association of ideas, led to talks concerning battles, sieges, fortunes in many lands.

Darcy's feelings during such conversations were ever on the side of such nationalities as Poland and Greece. The oppressed claimed his sympathy; Kosciusko was his hero, and Byron's description of Greece his favourite poetic subject for declamation. 'Approach, thou craven cowering slave, say is not this Thermopylæ?' he often half laughingly, half earnestly shouted out to some country labourer, who, seeing the young heir, as they called him, approach, would try to steal away from observation.

It must not be presumed that such subjects were continued incessantly between tutor and pupil. Mr. Martin was too wise to let his proud pupil even guess that his intention was to instruct him by the conversation.

Mr. Martin was an enthusiastic antiquary and collector of peasant lore of all sorts. Darcy soon found this out; and it served as a bond between them, for his own bent of mind was in that direction.

To his boy-mind the past seemed like a great treasure-house, and he loved to search for its hidden riches in his own way. His tutor put him on the right track, and showed him the proper way to set about such an undertaking. For had not Mr. Martin written a book on the origin of the round towers of Ireland?—had he not made discoveries of great magnitude in the caves, working in the dark like a mole? These things were well known; for these qualities, among others, made Darcy's uncle engage him for his nephew.

It will be remembered that one reason for which Mr.

Martin was engaged, was to keep Darcy from his night-rambles; but he did not know this. Old Mr. Darcy was very well satisfied with the way his nephew was getting on, and he thought the friendship which existed between him and his tutor would be a sufficient hindrance to a repetition of his former conduct, so he did not mention the matter to Mr. Martin.

When the winter nights came again, young Darcy felt in need of a little romance. But it was much more difficult now to leave the house and to return without observation, for Mr. Martin slept next door to him, and he, of course, was much more observant than old Mr. Darcy.

Darcy, one day, went slowly down the walk which led from the house to the stables, with his hands in his pockets, and whistling in a low key as he went. Tom was alone in the stables, and saw him coming.

‘There’s something up,’ he said to himself, for he knew his young master’s peculiarities. ‘Throth, I’d give a week’s wages to know what he’s thinkin’ av.’

Darcy walked slowly into the stables.

‘Anyone here, Tom?’

‘No, yer honor—no wan but me.’

‘Shut the door.’ The door was shut. ‘Tom, I want to go to Mrs. Mulrooney’s to-night. You said there was a dance there.’

‘Och, dhin, did I? Throth, divil a betther dance was iver held there afore. There’s blind Paddy, the fiddler, and ould Jimmy, the piper; and ould Mary Branigan is to sing her famous song that’s tin times as ould as herself.

‘Do you know any of it, Tom?’ asked Darcy, a happy thought then entering his head.

'Throth, no ; but I can whistle the tune. This is it,' and he went through a bar,

'All right ; that will do famously, Tom,' said Darcy, gleefully. 'Now, Tom,' he continued, laying his hand on his servant's shoulder, 'when you see Mr. Martin, begin to whistle that tune ; when he asks you what song is sung to it, you must use your brains.'

Tom did not seem to understand.

'Stupid !' said Darcy. 'Don't you understand ? He would go anywhere to get an old song.'

It then dawned on Tom.

'Oh ! divil a betther ! divil a betther !' he exclaimed, doubling himself up with laughter.

'Hush, Tom !' Darcy exclaimed ; 'here he is, coming down the walk. Open the door, Tom. I'll go up into the loft, and see how you get on.'

Mr. Martin entered.

'Nice day, sur !' Tom remarked.

'Very nice, Tom. For whom are you getting the harness ready ?'

'Oh, the ould masther, sur, is goin' to town ; he has to go to the assizes.'

'To be sure. I had forgotten that.'

Mr. Martin walked round the stables, examining the horses. While he did this Tom started the tune. A weird, wavering sort of old-world tune it was, and Tom was an excellent whistler, and made the stable re-echo the tones.

Mr. Martin stopped suddenly. 'What is that you are whistling, Tom ?' he asked.

'Only an ould tune, sur.'

'Whistle it again, Tom.'

Tom went over it again.

'Strange!' muttered Mr. Martin. 'I have not heard that tune before. What are the words, Tom?'

'The words is it, sur! Sure, the divil a wan in the counthry knows the words but ould Mary Branigan. She has lost so many teeth, sur, that divil a word can you understand that she sez, but you can tell the tune right enough.'

Mr. Martin pondered. 'Could you not get her to come up here some day, Tom?' he asked, 'so that we might get the words from her?'

'Not she, sur!' Tom replied, with a tinge of indignation. 'Catch her! Throth, the divil himself isn't prouder than Mary Branigan. Throth, it took no amount av coaxin' to get her to sing to-night; an' dear knows if they'll iver get her to sing agin, for she's gettin' crasser every year.'

Having delivered himself of this, Tom went out, and left his words to do their work.

Mr. Martin paced up and down the stable in deep thought. At length he exclaimed: 'I would give five pounds to get the words!—that I would!' and then relapsed into thought again. Finally he went out, and made his way towards the house.

Darcy came down from the loft with a countenance red with suppressed laughter, and now that Mr. Martin had gone, he enjoyed what he considered the joke thoroughly.

When old Mr. Darcy had gone to town, Mr. Martin and Darcy went out for their usual ride. Mr. Martin was rather more thoughtful than usual. At length he said, 'Tom has been telling me, Darcy, of a song which

an old hag hereabout sings. By what he says it must be well worth preserving.'

'I have heard of it,' said Darcy, 'but I can't say that I know the words.'

'That's the difficulty! that's the difficulty! I wonder how I could get them!' Mr. Martin said musingly.

They rode on in silence, Darcy quietly enjoying the success of his plan.

'You know, Darcy,' continued Mr. Martin, 'that literary men have often to go into curious places to get their information. There was Walter Scott, you know, Darcy; there was scarcely a hole or corner in Liddesdale that he did not search for materials for his "Border Minstrelsy."'

'Well, Mr. Martin, what of that?' inquired Darcy, as Mr. Martin paused.

'Why should not we, lesser lights though we be,' he continued, 'take at least equal pains in our researches?'

'It would be a shame if we did not,' Darcy answered, with apparent enthusiasm.

Mr. Martin was silent again.

'Darcy,' he at length said, as he pulled up his horse, 'you know all the people for miles round. Could you by any means get me introduced where Mary Branigan sings?'

'She sings so seldom,' Darcy replied.

'But,' continued Mr. Martin, 'Tom says she sings to-night.'

'Oh, if that's the case, I dare say you can get to hear her. As we ride by Mrs. Mulrooney's, I'll ask her about it.'

Mr. Martin was in ecstasies, though somewhat uneasy

in his mind. They pulled up at Mrs. Mulrooney's door, and made the necessary inquiries. Mrs. Mulrooney was wise enough to be circumspect in her language when she saw the strange gentleman with Darcy.

Mrs. Mulrooney would be greatly honoured by the presence of the gentlemen at her entertainment. It was true that Mary Branigan was to sing, and Mrs. Mulrooney would go bail 'that no better song could be heard than hers.' The ball was to begin at nine o'clock. With this information they were satisfied, and Mr. Martin rode off, feeling sure that he was on the road to a discovery of some importance. Perhaps in this way, he thought to himself, he might call to life an Irish 'Ossian,' whose verses had been carried down the stream of time by tradition. Darcy rode on in the height of spirits, now and then jumping his horse from the road into the adjoining field. This was a new discovery he had made, he looked on it solely in the light of an amusement, something akin to riding the donkey.

No sooner had Darcy and Mr. Martin left Mrs. Mulrooney's door than the inmates of all the cottages and cabins about crowded round the good woman, eager to know what the gentlemen wanted. But Mrs. Mulrooney at once assumed an air of importance, and wished to know if the 'gintry' of the country could not call on her without inquisitive people wanting to know all about it. Having thus snubbed her neighbours, she stood with folded arms in her own doorway in a defiant attitude, the envied of all.

And now the day advanced and evening drew nigh. Mr. Martin and Darcy made their preparations for the visit. The former took his ponderous note-book, and

well-pointed pencil, and both put on waterproofs and thick boots, for the night was wet, and Mrs. Mulrooney lived a few miles away.

When night came fairly down they started. Mr. Martin was unusually silent. As they neared the house the sounds of mirth and laughter were heard mingled with the scraping of the bow. They advanced to the door, which was open, where Mrs. Mulrooney met them, and showed them to a seat by the fire.

Mrs. Mulrooney had cautioned all who came to the ball, not to let it be known in any way that they had ever seen Mr. Darcy there before.

The presence of Mr. Martin made silence reign supreme for a time, but gradually it was forgotten, and the rough mirth and song flowed on once more.

Mr. Martin asked Darcy which was Mary Branigan. Darcy pointed her out; she was exactly the Mary Branigan of Mr. Martin's thoughts—an old hag with repulsive features. He gradually gained a seat near her, and waited expectantly to hear her sing.

In the meantime Darcy had told Mrs. Mulrooney not to ask for the song till he should give her a sign, as he wanted to see some of the fun, though he dared not join in it.

Mr. Martin's face showed evident signs of impatience as the evening wore on, and now and then signs of disgust, as something coarse obtruded itself upon his ears.

Darcy watched him keenly, and at length, seeing his patience nearly exhausted, he gave the sign to Mrs. Mulrooney, who immediately shouted out, 'Be asy there, Paddy, with that fiddle. Be quiet, boys. Maybe Mary Branigan will give us a song.'

All were silent when the old hag began ; she had a powerful voice for one so old, and uttered her words with great vigour, but they were very indistinct, and she swayed herself backwards and forwards as she sang.

It was quite useless for Mr. Martin to try and catch them. He waited patiently till she had done, and then asked Darcy whether they could not get her to repeat the words.

Mrs. Mulrooney showed them to her best room, where the words were with difficulty got from the singer.

Darcy could see by Mr. Martin's face that he was very much disappointed ; the words were not worth writing down, their indistinctness had made them mystery in the eyes of the peasantry.

'Let us get away from this place,' Mr. Martin said gruffly.

Darcy led him out into the darkness.

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## CHAPTER II.

### A MYSTERY.

'Each Orpheus must to the depths descend.'

M. FULLER.

ON the way back Mr. Martin never spoke. Darcy tried to start a conversation. The oppressive silence made him think over the trick he had played, and the more

he thought of it, the sorrier he became. He opened his mouth two or three times to ask Mr. Martin's pardon, but something hindered the words from being spoken.

Mr. Martin bade him a gloomy good-night as he went upstairs; Darcy threw himself upon his bed dressed as he was, and fell into a heavy sleep. A noise woke him; he started up, and listened; he felt cold and miserable. He heard the noise again; he was sure it came from the next room. Was Mr. Martin ill? he wondered. What should he do? He stood up in the dark, trembling and hesitating; a dull sound again reached his ear. He went quickly towards the door, and looked out. He listened again, but heard only the ticking of the clock on the stairs, which had knelled away the lives of his forefathers. He looked towards Mr. Martin's door, and a ray of light shooting through the darkness drew his attention. He went nearer, and saw that it came through the keyhole of the door of Mr. Martin's room. Again he heard a half-smothered sound; he stooped to the keyhole, and looked in. The first thing he saw was a portmanteau, and some boxes strapped and labelled; then he saw something, he knew not what at first, in a chair; a great groan came from the object, and then he knew that it was his tutor.

As he watched, he saw him writhe as in agony, and clench his hands, while his face assumed an expression terrible to look at. Darcy's own face was white with horror. What could it all mean—this suffering, this anguish? He closed his eyes to try and think what he should do. Scarcely had he done so when he heard another sound. Again he looked in, and saw that Mr.

Martin had dropped on his knees ; the next moment he saw him spring up again.

‘I dare not ! I dare not !’ he heard him say ; and then he saw him raise his clenched hands to heaven, while he sobbed : ‘Shattered again ! shattered again !’

Darcy felt that there was something too solemn here, for him to interfere—indeed, he was too much terrified to do so, with the darkness around him, and the silence only broken by these heartbreaking sobs : It was a new and strange feeling to him : it took all his courage out of him, and he went back tremblingly to his room.

The night had yet a few hours to run before the morning should break. These hours he passed in fitful periods of sleep, and in shuddering at frightful dreams. He never blessed the beams of light, which shot into his room, as he did that morning. He tried to gather his confused thoughts. Mr. Martin was suffering from some cause or other, and Darcy felt that he must try to help him. He, however, did not trace the suffering to its true cause, for what did he know as yet of good resolutions shattered in a moment—of the striving of human souls after their high ideal ? or of those human souls dashed down from the glorious heights to the dead level once more, wounded, and battered, and bleeding ?

He had sat on his bedside, how long he knew not, revolving the matter in his mind, when he heard the handle of Mr. Martin’s door turned. Now was his time ; he thought he would speak to his troubled tutor. He rushed to the door, and opened it ; Mr. Martin was just passing it. Darcy called his name, and reached out his hand to motion him to stop, but he took no notice. Darcy looked at his face ; it was white and statue-like

as he walked straight on, seeming utterly unconscious of his pupil's voice or presence. Darcy shrank back into his room with a sorrowful, puzzled expression on his face.

Old Mr. Darcy was writing in his private room, when he heard a knock at the door: the next moment Mr. Martin walked in. The old man pushed his spectacles up on his forehead, and asked him to take a seat, remarking at the same time that it was a nice morning. Mr. Martin did not seem to hear him, but grasped the back of a chair nervously.

'Mr. Darcy,' he said, 'you took me into your house to teach your nephew his duties to God and man; I have been unfaithful to my duty. Last night I took him where sedition, foul talk and blasphemy were his instructors. In short, sir, I came to say good-bye. My luggage is ready, and I should deem it a favour if you would send it to the station.'

He then turned to leave. Old Mr. Darcy was so astonished that he almost allowed him to do so without a word, but he now rushed forward and caught him by the arm.

'I really cannot understand you, Mr. Martin,' he said. 'Be cool, man; sit down, and let us talk the matter over.'

'I *am* cool, Mr. Darcy. There is nothing to talk over. I am unfit to be your nephew's companion and instructor. I have led him into evil, and I must take the consequence. The train goes in an hour: can I have the luggage sent down?'

'I'll ring for my nephew, Mr. Martin, and see what it is all about,' the old man said, bewildered.

Darcy came hurriedly from his room, and found his uncle walking backwards and forwards and looking very perplexed, and Mr. Martin standing white and motionless in the middle of the room.

‘What is the matter?’ he asked.

‘Matter!’ exclaimed his uncle, as he stopped short in his walk. ‘How can you ask? I can’t understand it. Here’s Mr. Martin wanting to go by the next train; says he’s not fit to be your tutor any longer. What does it all mean?’

Then it dawned upon Darcy that all this trouble was about him.

‘Oh, Mr. Martin!’ he exclaimed, almost with tears, ‘it was all my fault! I took you there—indeed I did!’

‘Took him where?’ asked his uncle, fiercely.

Then Darcy, in a few words, broken by sobs, told them both how he had deceived them. His contrition evidently was heartfelt.

‘You won’t go, Mr. Martin, will you?’ he asked eagerly.

‘I must, Darcy—I must,’ Mr. Martin replied sorrowfully. ‘I must start afresh. You will be better without me.’

Both uncle and nephew argued, and almost begged of him to stay, but to no purpose. He could not even eat in the house. There was no alternative but to order the carriage.

The astonished Tom had to bring it round, and to place the luggage on the top, hesitating over each article as he did so. Mr. Martin stepped in, and Darcy followed, while his uncle stood on the steps, with his

spectacles still on his forehead, looking like a man just awakened from a dream.

There was silence inside the carriage during the drive—a painful silence. Each would have spoken, but for some cause or other did not. There was not much time at the station, for no sooner had they got there than they saw the train coming. It puffed up, and Mr. Martin got in.

Darcy felt that he must speak.

‘Mr. Martin,’ he whispered, ‘will—will you forgive me?’

The train was snorting, the porters shouting, the bell ringing. Mr. Martin seized his hand and pressed it tightly, a tear struggled from his eye, but what he said was lost in the general din.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### AT COLLEGE.

‘A godlike manhood be his mighty dower!’

J. J. PIATT.

‘He’s a curious chap, isn’t he, sur?’ said Tom, on their way back.

He got no reply. Being thus rebuffed, he tried to whistle one of his favourite tunes, but after a few scattered notes, he gave it up. He also was silent.

The carriage arrived, and Darcy stepped slowly out. Under the oaks in the park his uncle was walking, with his hands turned behind him and his head bowed.

Darcy went to him and took his arm. They both walked on in silence : thus for over an hour backwards and forwards they marched. At length the old man stopped and pulled his watch out.

‘Time for lunch, nephew,’ he said.

‘Is it, uncle?’ the other replied dreamily.

They entered the house with measured step, arm-in-arm.

‘I don’t think we shall try another, nephew,’ the old man said, after lunch.

‘Very well, uncle,’ the nephew assented.

‘I’ll tell you what,’ the old man went on, ‘you must go through the university. This country life is playing the devil with you.’

‘Very well, uncle.’

‘All your ancestors have gone through it, and it won’t do for you to be behindhand in this age of progress. You would like to uphold the honour of your house when I am dead and gone, wouldn’t you?’

‘Ay, that I would!’ he replied, with beaming eyes; ‘and the honour of my country too!’

‘Bravo, my boy, bravo!’ the old man exclaimed. ‘I’ll write to Dr. Smith this very day. Three or four years there, my boy, will make a man of you—take all superfluous conceit away, and round the angles of your character. You will have plenty of time in the vacation to practise riding, shooting, etc.; but while you are there, nephew, work. Let work be your object—no gadding about the Green, a walking model for your tailor.’

‘All right, uncle,’ interrupted Darcy. ‘You may be sure I will not disgrace you or any of my kindred.’

‘Well said, my boy, well said! I believe you, my

boy, I believe you. And now I'll write to Dr. Smith, and get all particulars from him.'

Dr. Smith replied promptly. He would be happy to have the scion of such a noble house under him; he would find a fitting man to be his private tutor, who would train him morally and intellectually, and look after him in every way, etc.

And now the day arrived when Darcy was to measure himself with others, the day when he had to begin to live his own life, to stand or fall in the hour of peril. He went forth somewhat subdued by recent events, but still having a large stock of self-confidence, and—how could he help it?—of self-importance, too.

It was a bright purple morning when he awoke and looked out at the beloved fields and trees that he was about to leave. Rebellious thoughts arose in his heart: 'Why should he leave them to shut himself up in a city? What need had he, who would be the richest man in the county, as he had been told over and over again, to trouble himself with books and learning?'

As he thought, he heard his uncle's voice call him: it had a peculiar quivering sound that morning.

'Yes, uncle!' he had shouted in reply.

'Come, my boy; time is getting on.'

'All right, uncle.'

His rebellious thoughts vanished, and he could be heard trying to whistle a merry tune as he dressed himself. When he went down to breakfast, he found his appetite had deserted him; the tempting dishes had no power over him. His uncle, too, nibbled away at a piece of bread, but could not eat.

'It must have been our heavy supper last evening,

nephew,' his uncle suggested as the cause, with a forced little laugh.

His nephew did not argue the matter with him, but went hurriedly to the window, and stood looking out at a bird on a tree that had suddenly taken his fancy.

One would scarcely believe that those were tears in Tom's eyes as he got the carriage ready. As for old Mr. Darcy, he had not been so irritable for years. The butler, cook, and footman all received some uncomplimentary remarks from him with unfeigned astonishment.

The carriage draws up to the door. What is that off-horse doing that Tom should waste so much whipcord on him? Poor brute! Why should his skin be the outlet for pent-up feelings? And now away they go! Servants throng the windows; the old woman at the lodge-gates wipes her eyes as they go whirling past: the station is reached. The porters receive a share of the old man's satire, and endure it without retort; for well they know he is no niggard in his gratuities.

'Going, sir?' the guard asks, as he sees the old man put his foot upon the step.

'No, sir!' growled back. And now he is off.

'Good-bye, uncle! Good-bye, Tom!' Darcy shouts out.

'Good-bye, my boy—God bless you!' the old man shouts after him.

'Where to now, sir?' Tom inquires.

'Home,' the old man replies, in a husky voice.

When Darcy went to college he was eighteen years of age; being tall and well developed for that age, he suddenly found himself considered a man. His reli-

gious views were very imperfect, and were chiefly gathered from what he heard at church; for though the rector of the parish in which he lived had faithfully instructed the farmer's sons in their religious duties, he seemed to think that Darcy could acquire theology by intuition.

Darcy soon entered with zest into boating, football, cricket, and the various other manly exercises within his reach. He had a fair amount of honest pride, and this helped him not to be behind the generality of his companions in book-knowledge. His abilities were above the average, so that with a moderate amount of work he acquired a moderate reputation.

In his early years at college low murmurs of discontent were heard throughout the land, and were re-echoed in the university. In the debating-club, the Wrongs of Ireland, Repeal of the Union, Equality, Fixity of Tenure, and such like subjects were discussed again and again.

There you might have heard Mr. McFlynn, who prided himself on his classic style, and who cultivated that to the detriment of his argument; there you might have seen O'Haran, who intended one day to lead the Irish bar, and who thought these occasions good practice for his future calling. He judged of the success of the debate by the number of quibbles which he successfully introduced without being detected.

But there were a few, Darcy among the number, who spoke from conviction, and who, notwithstanding their often unpolished sentences and their utter lack of legal sharp practice, yet convinced in a great many cases the minds of the listeners.

At this time secret societies were formed by the mal-

contents all over Ireland, the capital being their headquarters and chief stronghold. Men of all religions and all shades of political opinions joined them, not in great numbers certainly, but yet in sufficient numbers to give the society a show of importance. These societies had emissaries in the university, who informed their leaders as to those who were likely to join them.

From Darcy's utterances in the debating-club, and also in private, it was thought that the society would have little difficulty in inducing him to join it. 'He would be such a gain, too! A young man very soon to be absolute owner of a large property! One in the first flush of enthusiasm, who would not be over-particular as to the disposal of his money!'

Darcy's social position gained him access to the best society. He was constantly being invited to dinners, balls, and other amusements; and it really required much strength of purpose to use such blessings in moderation. He, however, had sense enough to see that his whole college-life would be frittered away if he accepted invitations indiscriminately. He accordingly accepted them more with regard to his own leisure than with regard to the people who invited him. One of these occasions was of sufficient importance to be recorded.

The Honourable Henry Morton had invited a large company to his residence, a few miles from the city. There appeared the same faces which Darcy had seen, time after time, at the various houses which he visited, with one or two new ones thrown in to vary the proceedings.

One of the guests, a middle-aged gentleman, when in

the billiard-room, where Darcy and a few friends had retired to have a quiet game, casually, as it were, introduced the subject which was then creating a sensation, viz., the wrongs of Ireland.

Now, introducing a subject of a controversial character at a private party was supposed to be very bad taste, if not a positive mark of very ill-breeding. Captain Tuke, a great authority on such matters, who was then placing his ball for a canon, stopped suddenly in the midst of that act, and fixing his eye-glass in his right eye, endeavoured to scowl the stranger into silence. This, however, had not the desired effect, for the stranger went on as before. He was, however, interrupted by a gentleman, who questioned his statements, and went into his reasons for doing so; another backed him up. Darcy seconded the stranger; the argument grew heated, and there was every sign that the personal element would soon be introduced.

Captain Tuke, who had hitherto stood by during the debate, looking beseechingly from one to the other, now rushed out of the room, and almost dragged the Honourable Henry Morton to the billiard-room without a word of explanation. In a moment the latter saw that the tinder was scorched, and that an explosion was imminent.

‘Come, gentlemen,’ he said, ‘the ladies are waiting for you. Darcy, Lady Flora has just been asking for you. Come along—come along; no time to spare!’

They all followed him, secretly glad that this loophole had presented itself.

Later in the evening, Darcy and the stranger were alone in a recess.

'How courageous you were!' Darcy said, 'to touch such a subject!'

'We may as well find out our friends from our enemies at once,' he replied; 'it must be done sooner or later. Our country is in a wretched state,' he continued; 'strong arms and strong wills must be found to free her from the millstone that is about her neck.'

'I hope to live to see the day,' said Darcy, 'when she shall again regain her place among the nations.'

'That day will come,' said the stranger; 'it only remains for us to work with a will.'

'Here's that insipid Lady Flora,' said Darcy, petulantly. 'I must ask her for a dance. By the way, would you mind coming to my lodging to-night? there is plenty of room.'

'Oh, Mr. Darcy! I have come to claim my dance,' said Lady Flora, with a smile.

'Oh, a thousand pardons, Lady Flora!' said Darcy. 'I really had forgotten that this was yours;' and away they went in the mazes of the giddy waltz.

After the waltz Darcy, with Lady Flora on his arm, walked slowly down a corridor attached to the ball-room. Pictures were hung on each side, to give the dancers intellectual recreation while they rested.

As they turned round at the far end where the light was rather dim, Darcy gave a sudden start.

'What is the matter, Mr. Darcy?' Lady Flora exclaimed.

'Oh, nothing, nothing,' he replied; 'it is somewhat cold down here.'

He, however, as soon as he could politely get rid of Lady Flora, sought the place again. There he stood

with folded arms before the painting of a girl. It was a picture on which one whose soul was in harmony with it could gaze—‘cheated of care and time.’ There the beautiful image looked down upon him through the dim light, raising the best and purest emotions in his soul.

Now and again the strains of the music roused him, and he tore himself away to whiz round in a dream with some fair partner. After each dance, however, he wandered back to the enchantress.

At length the end drew nigh, only a very few dancers responded to the music. Cheeks looked pale and eyes looked heavy; the ladies left the dull room, and silently stole away, as if they feared that if morning caught them lingering, he would rob them of their charms.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### CAUGHT.

‘Beware! That soaring path is lined with shrouds.’  
ADAH MENKEN.

DARCY stood still before the picture. A hand was laid upon his shoulder, he turned quickly round, and there saw the stranger whose part he had taken in the billiard-room.

‘I came to thank you for giving me such help against our enemies,’ he said.

‘What enemies?’ Darcy asked, not yet quite awake.

‘The enemies of our country,’ the stranger said.

This subject had always a charm for Darcy; he took

the stranger's arm and walked down the corridor. 'I shall always be ready to defend my country,' he said.

'It gladdens my heart to hear you say so,' the other replied.

The ball-room was deserted when they reached it; this told them it was time to go.

'You'll come with me, won't you?' Darcy pleaded.

'Let me see,' he replied. 'How far is your place?'

'It is in the city, four or five miles from this. We shall be there in twenty minutes, for I have got a very good horse to take us.'

'Oh, then I'll go!' the stranger replied.

As they drove along through the early morning the fog was rising from its damp bed; the lazy kine seemed huge and indistinct seen through it; the hedgerows presented wondrous beauties; the spider's webs hung heavy with crystal drops; a lark went circling aloft, and sung above the mists as if its little heart could never thank enough its bounteous Maker; a few clouds edged with light floated above, and the crows had begun their day's work.

Presently they got into the suburbs. Neat and cleanly rows of houses lined the road, occupied by business men; still further on, and what a scene! Rows of mud cottages appeared, about six foot high, white-washed on the outside like garnished sepulchres, heaps of dirt standing in front—broken window panes stuffed with straw. A wretched heap of rags with something like a human face peeping through lay huddled up at one door, and at the end of all a huge policeman stood. As they passed through the streets, down narrow openings simi-

lar rows of houses were seen, from which proceed at night such mingled cries and groans as make the passer-by shudder.

On they went, till at length the driver pulled up at a lofty house in a fashionable street. Darcy let himself in with a latch-key, and both went upstairs to his apartments.

'The morning air has got into my throat,' Darcy said, 'what do you say to a drop of the best Irish?'

'I think it is just the medicine I require,' said the other, laughing.

'Here it is then,' said Darcy, taking a bottle out of a cupboard. 'Here's a tumbler, it must do duty for both of us, so pour out some for yourself. By Jove, how cold it is! We must get to bed soon, and sleep this dissipation off.'

'Confusion to the enemies of Ireland!' drank the stranger, as he emptied the tumbler.

'I'm with you there,' said Darcy, pouring out some for himself. 'Confusion to the enemies of Ireland!' he repeated.

'By the way,' said the stranger, 'what a joke that was last night. How those fellows got heated!'

'The curs!' said Darcy, emphatically; 'what a state they got into! There was no poverty in Ireland, according to them—no wrong, no injustice, no grinding oppression. It was all a delusion—a sham. Oh, it is a devilish baseness to fatten on the country's labour, yet laugh at the country's woes!'

'They were officers in the army,' said the stranger, 'and were paid for their opinions.'

'Oh, that accounts for it,' said Darcy.

'By the way,' said the stranger, 'there were a great many of us there last night.'

'What do you mean by "of us"?' asked Darcy.

'Oh, I mean of our party.'

'But,' asked Darcy, 'how do you know them? No one joined in the discussion but us. Are you acquainted with them?'

'Oh no!' said the stranger; 'not at all. I never saw some of them before last night.'

'Well, then,' said Darcy, 'I can't make it out.'

'Well, you see,' said the stranger, 'we must have means of distinguishing each other when we meet, so that we may be able to assist one another in difficulties. Now, I knew the majority there last night were on our side, and that if our opponents became very rough, we could have overcome them by sheer force of numbers.'

Darcy leaned his head on his hands and fell into a fit of thinking.

'I should like to join you,' he said suddenly. 'I am only an outsider at present.'

'Bravo! bravo!' exclaimed the stranger. 'I knew you were made of stern stuff. Give me your hand. I hope soon to be able to call you brother.'

'I hope I shall be a worthy one,' Darcy replied.

A noise in the house recalled them to their position. The servants had arisen, and were beginning their work downstairs.

'We must turn in,' said Darcy, laughing. 'I had almost forgotten that it was morning. That's your room to the right, Mr.— Oh! by the way, what's

your name? Think of me not asking your name before!'

'Gaunt is my name,' said the stranger—'John Gaunt. I feel sleepy, too. What a bore these balls are to be sure! We may as well have another drop,' he continued, as he filled the tumbler, 'before turning in; it makes one sleep better.'

'Oh, help yourself,' said Darcy; 'I have had enough.'

'Your health then,' said Gaunt, as he drained the glass. 'Capital, Darcy!' he exclaimed. 'Never tasted better in my life! Not much under twenty-five a gallon! Well, good-night, my friend—or rather, good-morning. I'll leave you to your slumbers.'

So saying he went out, and threw himself undressed on his bed.

It was past noon when Darcy awoke. There was a smile on his lips, for his ideal, the fair image of the previous night, had accompanied him into dreamland. He arose and dressed himself, his mind being filled with pleasant thoughts. As he stepped forward to ring the bell, he caught sight of the unfinished bottle of whisky, and the tumbler standing by it. The sight somehow jarred terribly on his mind; he thought of all the misery he had seen wrought by drink since he came to Dublin, and then he thought of those tender eyes gazing at him with such purity the night before.

'I will be a man!' he said firmly. 'No more of you for me!' and he poured the liquid out and threw the bottle into the grate. He rang the bell. 'Send my breakfast up,' he said to the servant who answered it.

Suddenly he remembered Gaunt.

‘Oh, I forgot!’ he shouted after the servant; ‘breakfast for two. There is a friend staying with me!’

He walked towards Gaunt’s room, laughing at the idea of forgetting that he had a visitor. The door yielded, and he went in. There lay Gaunt in his evening-dress; his neck was on his pillow, and his head hung over on the other side. Darcy shook him, but for some time could only get divers groans in reply. At length Gaunt opened his eyes, and laughed a short idiotic laugh at him. Suddenly he jumped up, and ran to the washstand, where he clutched the ewer and drank the water frantically.

‘This thirst!’ he said; ‘curse it!’

‘Well, I hope you are better,’ said Darcy, laughing.

‘Oh, I’m all right now, thank you,’ he replied. ‘Darcy, my friend, I would be eternally obliged to you if you could get me a drop of whisky—half a tumbler will be enough. I feel so dreadfully cold.’

‘I’m very sorry, my dear fellow,’ said Darcy, ‘but I used it all.’

‘Oh, it does not matter at all,’ Gaunt went on. ‘I’ll just run down the street and have a drop before breakfast. I’ll be back in a second!’ and, seizing his hat, he rushed out.

‘Nothing like a drop of good spirits, Darcy, to put life into you!’ he remarked, when he came back.

Darcy said nothing.

Just then breakfast was announced, and after sundry jokes about breakfast being at that time of day, they tried to do it justice.

The meal being over, Gaunt said:

‘I must be off now, Darcy. Many thanks for your

hospitality. Our general meeting will be next week, and I shall let you know before then the place and time of it. By the way,' he went on, as he put on his overcoat, 'won't you come down the street and join me in a bottle?'

'No, thank you,' said Darcy; 'I don't feel inclined for such a beginning to the day, especially as I have to set to and get some work ready for lecture to-morrow.'

'Oh, very well,' said Gaunt, approvingly. 'Your digestion must be very good. As for me, I must always have a drop after breakfast to assist mine. Good-bye, then. I'll see you again.'

John Gaunt, as he called himself, was one of those Americans, or rather, Irish-Americans, who return to their native country on the slightest sign of a rebellion. His fortunes had sunk very low in America, entirely through his own laziness and hatred of regular work. He came back to Ireland with his wits sharpened by intercourse with the Yankees, and armed with the shibboleths of the secret societies. He soon was able to push himself into the higher ranks of society, for his manners were plausible, and he could be a flatterer when necessary. More of him will be learned by-and-by.

When Gaunt had gone, Darcy wrote a note to the Hon. Henry Morton, running thus:

'MY DEAR MORTON,

'I took a fancy last night to the painting of a girl hanging at the end of the corridor which led from the ball-room. If you have no special liking for it, I should like to buy it from you. 'Yours, etc.,

'J. DARCY.'

To which he got a reply next day:

‘MY DEAR DARCY,

‘As I do not care very much for the picture you allude to, I can let you have it cheap. I picked it up at a picture-dealer’s in England, as I considered it pretty at the time ; but I cannot understand the face : it is too pensive for my taste.’

The Hon. Henry here mentioned his price, more than twice what he had given for it. Darcy sent him a cheque at once for the amount, and in a few days had the painting hung in his room. No Madonna had ever a more enthusiastic worshipper than this unknown girl.

Darcy’s work at college went on as usual. He was now nearing the end of his course, and often sat up late at night, deep in the entrancing and unpractical study of metaphysics. The study of ethics was of great advantage to him, his ideas on religions had been so very few and undetermined. It was also of great advantage to him to come to the study with a mind unimbued by the narrow and often bigoted views of a country rector, for now his religious foundations were wider, his moral sympathies greater, and the curse of sect did not rule his heart. The only leading ideas towards which his mind was prejudiced were those relating to the government of Ireland, the tyranny of the landowners, and the degradation of the peasantry.

Had the University in its wisdom thought fit to put him through a course of political economy, many of these ideas might have been corrected, if not thoroughly displaced.

One day he received a note running thus :

'DEAR SIR,

'I have consulted our leaders as to what we spoke about. They will be delighted to have your assistance in their arduous duties. I will meet you at the college-gates at 10 p.m. to-morrow night, and direct you to our meeting-place.

'Your obedient servant,

'JOHN GAUNT.'

At the appointed time Darcy met Gaunt, who gave him an address. To his surprise, he saw that it was in one of the principal streets. He looked at it more closely, but there was no doubt about it. Having satisfied himself, he turned round to speak to Gaunt, but the latter was nowhere to be seen. He pondered a moment or two, then walked in the direction of the street whither he was going. Having arrived at the place, he somewhat hurriedly rang the bell. In a moment it was opened by a footman in livery.

'Walk in, sir,' he said.

Darcy followed him. They ascended two flights of stairs, and then the footman turned down a long passage, and knocked in a peculiar manner at a door on the right. The knock was answered by another from within. The footman again knocked, and the door was opened.

'Walk in, sir,' said the man who opened the door.

Darcy did so.

He found himself in a small bare room; a few chairs were scattered about, a fire burned briskly on the hearth, one wall was darkened with a great many coats and hats hung upon it. There was no window in the room.

'Won't you take your coat off, sir?' the servant asked.

Darcy did so, and the servant hung it up, and then placed a chair for him and asked him to sit down.

Having done this, the servant went to a door that opened out of the room they were in, and knocked in the same peculiar manner as the footman had done previously; his knock was answered from within by another. To this he replied, and then left the room.

Darcy was not kept long waiting; a dignified middle-aged gentleman entered.

'Mr. Darcy, I believe,' he said.

Darcy bowed.

He then entered into conversation with Darcy; questioned him on his political faith, his opinion of the state of affairs in Ireland; asked him how far he would go with them in trying to redress these wrongs, and a host of other matters.

Darcy grew quite enthusiastic as they conversed, at which the other seemed well satisfied.

'It is useless to talk any further,' he said. 'I shall now ask you the all-important question: Are you willing to become a member of our Brotherhood, and to share all our risks?'

'I am,' Darcy replied.

'Good!' the other said. 'I will send those to you who will administer the oath.'

In a few minutes three men entered; strong, determined-looking fellows they were.

'This way, sir,' one of them said, lifting a curtain at one end of the room.

Darcy followed them rather with curiosity than fear.

They led the way into a room smaller than the one they had just left.

'We must ask you again,' said one, 'whether you are willing to join our Brotherhood, and to share all our risks?'

'I am,' Darcy replied, firmly.

They then blindfolded him. Now Darcy began to feel not exactly afraid, but very uncomfortable; they stripped his coat and waistcoat off, and led him, as it seemed, through countless passages. At length he stopped, his breast was bared, and he was told to kneel. The solemn voice of an old man made him listen attentively; there was no need to ask him to do so, for all his senses were stretched to the utmost.

The old man then read the rules of the society:

'And if you, John Darcy,' he continued, when he had got through them, 'by word or deed infringe any of them, the Lord have mercy on your soul.'

The oath was then administered, which he had to repeat, and as he concluded with the words, 'and if I, John Darcy, disclose or betray any of the secrets about to be committed to me, I hereby commit my body to the avenger and my soul to destruction,' he felt that they were fearful words. While repeating the oath he felt the edge of a dagger or some other pointed weapon over his heart.

As he finished he felt a violent and, as it seemed to him, supernatural sensation; it was like a violent blow in the inside of his chest; he staggered under it, and when it had passed huge drops of sweat were on his face. This was a new use for electricity.

He was then led away blindfold, his clothes were

restored, he was led further on, and when the bandage over his eyes was taken off, he found himself in a room brilliantly lighted. He could not distinguish any one for a few moments, but soon he saw a number of gentlemen seated around the table; all looked very solemn. He was then taught the signs and symbols of the Brotherhood, by which they knew each other in all circumstances. When this was over he was shaken heartily by the hand, and the other business of the meeting continued.

Darcy could now look round the room; it seemed to be in the centre of the house, and, like the anteroom, it had no window. At one end of the table sat Gaunt, writing busily, and surrounded by papers. He was evidently the secretary.

He took no notice of Darcy till the latter, later in the evening, being near him, spoke to him. His reply had lost its familiarity—he answered as an inferior answers to a superior.

It was late at night when the meeting broke up; only a few went out at the front door, others took a back way, while others waited and followed one by one. Before Darcy went he was told he would receive commands from head-quarters. The expression sounded curious to him. He felt inclined to answer that he was his own master, till he remembered his oath, in which he had sworn obedience to the head tribunal.

Now began a new phase of Darcy's life: his purse and his time were heavily drawn on for the fulfilment of his new duties. He was constantly receiving commands to attend certain meetings, and on several occasions he had to preside over assemblies in the lowest part of the

city. He was surprised at the number of people he found belonging to the society; many whom he had known before in social life he now found in the same union as himself.

He did not altogether like his new position. There was nothing in it of his old enthusiasm and frankness; all was underhand and calculating. Nevertheless, he made up his mind to do his utmost to further the interests of the society. 'The end,' he said to himself, 'will be worth all—the salvation of my country—my poor country!'

As the time wore on he gradually became better acquainted with the working of the society. The chiefs allowed him nearer their presence, for he had wealth—and what door is closed to that? They never, however, gave him their full confidence, for his honest enthusiasm made him dangerous in their eyes.

It can readily be imagined that his college work fared badly. His wealth even at the University had given him privileges, for he was not supposed to be as punctual or as clever as poorer mortals; yet his tutor one day thought it his duty to speak to him.

'Mr. Darcy,' he said, 'I am very sorry to see you wasting your time. You used to work fairly well for a man in your position, but I don't know what has happened to you for some months past; you seem to be getting further and further behind. Now, Mr. Darcy, do try! For the honour of your family and your name, you ought to exert yourself. I really hope I shall not have to speak to you again.'

Darcy bore the rebuke meekly. He did not say a word, for he could not explain. His tutor looked after

His tutor knew that something momentous had happened to him as soon as he saw him. Darcy's face was pale. He merely stretched out the telegram. His tutor read it. Darcy had not a very high opinion of this tutor of his. He was to him a man of mathematics, whose soul was measured by a formula. Never, except when he rebuked him for not working better, had he had more than a direct question or answer from him, and that event had been explained to him to mean that Dr. Smart did it for a selfish motive.

How surprised was he then to hear this machine, as he thought him, say :

'I'm very sorry indeed, Mr. Darcy, for your trouble. I know you must feel it very much, but I hope your uncle will soon be well again. I knew him when a youth. Sit down, Mr. Darcy.'

Darcy sat down.

'I will not keep you long,' Dr. Smart went on, with some hesitation. 'I fear you will not be able to visit us again: other duties will have to be attended to.' Then abruptly: 'What friends have you should your uncle die, Mr. Darcy?'

Darcy was startled.

'No one,' he groaned; 'no one!'

Dr. Smart rose and walked about the room. He seemed agitated; he put his hand on Darcy's shoulder.

'I pity you from my heart,' he said. 'You will find this trial very hard. But you are young. Your friends are in the future; your wife and children will make your home blessed. I—I have left mine in the past; I have no future!'

‘May God pity you, sir!’ Darcy exclaimed, with sincerity.

‘God pity me!’ Dr. Smart repeated, with a laugh, grim and fierce. ‘Not He! He never did—He never will! What more can He do than He has done? taken them all!’ and he resumed his walk, with his head bowed, and his hands over his eyes.

Darcy looked on wonderingly, and quite forgot his own grief in seeing that of the man before him. ‘Backwards and forwards he walked, unconscious of Darcy’s presence. The latter grew uneasy—valuable time was passing away—but Dr. Smart showed no appreciation of the fact. Darcy was further perplexed by seeing his tutor throw himself on a sofa, and lie there as if asleep. He waited five minutes, but still the doctor stirred not. Darcy feared to wake or rouse him; yet he knew not what to do. After waiting five minutes more, however, he scribbled his farewell on a piece of paper, which he left on the table, and went out.

He hurried away, wondering whether his tutor were not crazy. He took a cab, and drove to the physician’s house, whither the telegram had directed him.

‘The train leaves at half-past eight,’ the latter said, when he read the telegram. ‘I shall meet you there.’

He then asked to be excused, as he had many people to see before then.

As Darcy left the doctor’s house, he happened to see Gaunt on the other side of the street, and beckoned to him. Gaunt came across; his manner was very subdued. Darcy told him how he had to go so soon, and he hoped the council would not mind. He asked Gaunt to explain his absence to them, and to tell them

that his time should be given to the cause in the country as heartily as it had been in the city.

Gaunt said that he was sure it would be all right, and that he would explain everything.

Darcy was about to turn away when Gaunt said :

‘I may not have the opportunity of seeing you again, sir ; and for some time I have wished to apologise to you for my conduct on the night you were so kind as to ask me to your rooms. It was not quite as it should be ; but I hope you will not think any worse of me for it.’

‘Not I, my dear Gaunt !’ Darcy replied. ‘Don’t think of it, man ! If we were all taken to task for such trifling things, it would soon become an unbearable world.’

‘Oh, thank you, sir,’ said Gaunt, with humility. ‘My mind could not rest till I had asked your forgiveness.’

‘Good-bye, Gaunt,’ Darcy said, waving his hand ; ‘I have not much time to spare.’

‘Good-bye, sir ; God bless you, sir,’ Gaunt replied.

Darcy walked hastily in the direction of his rooms, while Gaunt looked after him with an amused smile till he was lost to view.

Darcy had a wretched railway journey. Dr. Prest went to sleep soon after they started, but Darcy, try how he might, could not get a wink. The lazy train crawled along, stopping unconscionable lengths of time at each station at which it called ; and as if that were not enough, it took it into its head now and again to shunt into some siding, and remain there for what seemed ages.

At length, after eight weary hours, in the grey morning light, he began to recognise fields, houses, and

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trees, with which he was familiar. His heart leaped up, for here at length were companions, at least, so they seemed to him now. From the carriage-window he watched the sun peep over the mountains in the distance, and here and there touching the trees of the valley with gold, and there a few miles to the left, hidden by a hill, was his home. He knew the exact spot.

This train of thought brought back his uncle to his mind, lying there. He pictured to himself the smile on the dear face, and the warm pressure of the hand when they should meet. How he could cheer him up, and soon have him walking about again!

The train began to slacken speed, and this aroused him from his pleasant reverie. He awoke Dr. Prest, who could scarcely believe that they had arrived, so short did the time appear to him.

The train stopped. There was Tom, with a serious face, quite unusual with him; he did not speak to either of them, but hurriedly snatched up their portmanteaus and placed them in the carriage; he then jumped on the box, and scarcely had they got in when off they went. How the horses did go! Dr. Prest looked terrified as they whirled past houses and turned round corners with amazing rapidity. The old woman at the lodge gates had them wide open, and Tom never slackened speed but swept through them. Suddenly Dr. Prest and Darcy were flung into each other's arms—the carriage had stopped.

Darcy jumped out and hurried into the house, leaving Dr. Prest to follow. Inside he was met by the family doctor.

'Where is he?' Darcy asked. 'Let me see him at once!' he exclaimed, as he stared wildly at the doctor.

'Your uncle is dangerously ill, Mr. Darcy,' he replied; 'it would be as much as his life is worth to disturb him.'

When Darcy heard that he seemed to have lost all his strength. The doctor took him gently by the arm, and led him into an adjoining room.

'Wait here, Mr. Darcy,' he said, 'till Dr. Prest and I have seen your uncle, and then perhaps if you are very quiet you can see him.'

Darcy did not reply. He had sat down, and was holding his head with both hands.

In a few minutes the doctor returned.

'You can come now,' he said; 'but quietly! very quietly!'

He went out on tiptoe, and Darcy followed him mechanically. He led Darcy to the room where the old man lay. Dr. Prest stood at the foot of the bed, a nurse sat by the side.

As soon as Darcy caught sight of the pale placid face and the snowy hair of his uncle, he stretched out his arms towards him, with a heart-rending moan, and advanced a few hurried steps as if to clasp him, but the doctor put his arm before him and motioned silence.

The old man suddenly opened his eyes, and looked around with an uneasy look.

The nurse bent down to him, and asked him if he wanted anything.

'Has he come?' he feebly asked.

The doctor motioned to Darcy to go near. He

stepped quickly to the bedside, and looked into his uncle's eyes.

'Do you know me?' he asked.

A pleased and grateful look came over the old man's face. With an effort he raised his arm, and placed it round his nephew's neck; his face became filled with content, he closed his eyes, and slowly, slowly his arm slid from Darcy's neck, till it fell prone on the bed. He was dead!

They could not get Darcy to believe it for some time, so natural and beautiful a smile played round the dead man's mouth. At length they led him from the room, and left him to his grief.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### R E S P O N S I B I L I T Y.

'Compound perilous  
Of Hell and Heaven, wrath and woman's fears.'  
A. SMITH.

DARCY'S various duties soon softened into a loving memory his grief for his dear old uncle.

He now began to find out what an amount of work his uncle had to do, for now it all came upon his shoulders. Owners of property who did not care much about their duty easily rid themselves of such troubles by living elsewhere; but Darcy was not one of these. He thought, and rightly, that if he gained a living by

his tenants, he ought to give them some return and put himself to some inconvenience for their sakes.

The majority of his tenants idolised him; but there were some who were never contented, who always had a grievance. It was very difficult to decide which man had a real grievance and which was merely trying to cheat his landlord, so that, with the best intentions, Darcy sometimes feared that he was unjust.

Tom was a great help to him in such perplexing moments, ever since the time he used to wait up for him at night in his boyish days. Darcy found him loyal and clever in getting him out of difficulties.

'Confound it, Tom!' Darcy said one day, 'here's Widow Malone crying to me about her farm, and her dead husband, and I don't know what else. The agent, she says, wants to force her to pay her rent, and she has not a penny to pay it with; she wants me to lend her some money to get her over the winter. What do you think of it?'

'Och, the ould hypocrite!' Tom exclaimed, 'divil a copper, divil a farthin' ye'll give her! Sure it was lasht week she got tin pounds from her son in America, and her daughter, be the way, must go shoppin' the very next day; and now you may see her waddlin' about as grand as any lady! Och, divil a fardin' I'd give her!'

'Very well, Tom—very well,' Darcy said; 'don't get excited. I'm glad you know the state of the case—it will make my mind easier.'

Tom, when interrupted, unlike many of his countrymen, said no more.

In many such ways he assisted his master; but

though his knowledge of the district in which they lived was great, it was not possible that he could know the particulars of all cases.

Scarcely had Darcy settled down manfully to do his duty, than Father John, the parish-priest, called on him. He had the usual rotundity of a priest, and had rather a cringing way for one in his position.

‘Mr. Darcy, I presume,’ he said, with a low bow; ‘I suppose you have not heard of me, sir? I am Father John, the unworthy priest of this large parish. The country round, sir, is talking of you; your goodness and kindness to the poor is in every mouth: may the Almighty bless you and reward you, sir.’

‘Oh, thank you—thank you,’ said Darcy, laughing; ‘you flatter me, I’m sure. Sit down, sir; I am very glad you have come to see me. I have been overwhelmed with invitations to balls and dinner-parties; but no one has as yet been so kind as to come and see me, as you have done. But I don’t mind; I have been kept very busy. Your work must be very severe also, Father John?’ he said, changing the subject.

‘It is, sir; this parish is six miles square, sir, it stretches to the west as far as old Michael Flaherty’s cabin; perhaps you know Michael, sir?’

Darcy shook his head.

‘Oh, never mind,’ Father John went on; ‘to the east it goes as far as Molly Bradley’s shebeen; to the north as far as the river Brannow, and it is bounded on the south side by the range of Slieve Maddha; there, sir, there’s one’s work cut out for him. Three masses on Sundays as regular as the clock, and what with christenings, funerals, and weddings, I am almost worn

off my feet. But duty, sir! duty is my watchword! In all circumstances that thought supports me. It is a grand thing to do one's duty,' he said, looking straight at Darcy.

'I suppose so,' the latter replied, 'but at the same time I must confess that I do not think it easy work.'

'Precisely so, sir,' Father John assented; 'it is not, as you say, always pleasant, but it is necessary to do it, and when it is done, we must only trust to the approval of conscience as a fitting reward. The one follows the other as certainly as the moon follows the earth, or the seasons each other!'

'Oh, hang it!' Darcy interrupted, somewhat petulantly, for he was in truth worried with the amount of his work. 'It's never done; you talk as if it were a problem solved beyond all doubt—the approval of conscience, indeed! I tell you, sir, that when I thought I had done what you call my duty, I was on the rack, dragged hither and thither by conflicting feelings. Often when I have done what I knew to be wrong, I have slept after it as peaceably as a child on its mother's breast. It's all a muddle, sir—a thorough muddle! You clergymen need not try to lay down rules, for you cannot.'

They both were silent for a few moments, Darcy pacing the room, and Father John following him curiously with his eyes.

Suddenly Darcy stopped, and going up to Father John, placed his hand on his shoulder: 'I am very sorry, Father John, for being so rude,' he said; 'I did not mean it.'

‘Oh, never mind, sir, never mind,’ Father John replied hurriedly, with a forced laugh, ‘young men will have strange ideas,’ he went on. ‘Why, sir, when I was at Maynooth, I was very nearly running away with a milliner from a draper’s shop, had not the Holy Virgin’ (here he crossed himself) ‘kept me from such a sin.’

Father John commenced to laugh heartily at what he considered a good joke, but stopped short when he saw that Darcy did not join him.

They then talked of the weather, and such never-failing subjects of conversation; at length Father John said: ‘I must be going now, Mr. Darcy—can I have a few private words with you? I will not keep you long.’

‘Oh, certainly,’ said Darcy, being rather surprised: ‘we are quite safe here.’

Father John fumbled his pocket, and brought out a paper tied with a piece of ribbon; he put on his glasses, and began to read in a low voice:

‘The executive beg to inform you that John Darcy, Esq., has been appointed to take charge of your district in all matters relating to the Brotherhood; you will hand over to him all documents and symbols of your office, and inform him of his appointment to this post; you will also give him all the assistance in your power, and further inform him that we shall send a trusty brother to help him in the work of organisation.’

Father John held the paper in his left hand, and holding out his right, which Darcy took, said:

‘Mr. Darcy, another man might be jealous, but I am not. Allow me most heartily to congratulate you on your

new dignity, a dignity of which any man might be proud. You have a grand work before you, sir; the hearts of your countrymen already warm towards you. May I live to see the day when this down-trodden land shall be free, and when the name of Darcy shall be lauded to the skies, as one who was chiefly helpful in bringing about that great result.'

'You will give my best thanks to the executive, Father John,' said Darcy; 'and be assured that all my powers and time shall be given to the task of bringing about that great event.' He paused for a moment: the grandeur of the undertaking floated before his eyes. 'We stand here, Father John,' he continued, solemnly, 'two men joined together in a glorious cause. No ties of wife or child fetter us—we have to work together for the future. Let us kneel and swear that, to the utmost of our abilities, trusting in the justice of our cause, we shall consecrate all our being to the deliverance of our wretched—our truly wretched country.'

He thereupon knelt, and bowing his head, raised his right hand towards heaven. He remained for some time as if entranced. Father John had dropped heavily on one knee, and had raised his arm in imitation of Darcy; but seeing the latter so much engrossed, he quietly took his handkerchief from his pocket, and having folded it, placed it under his knee; he then leisurely surveyed the room, looking curiously at Darcy now and again. At length, seeing him moving, he raised his arm again, and moving his lips, looked fixedly before him.

He rose a few seconds after Darcy.

'You cheer my heart,' said Father John. 'With one so enthusiastic as you at our head, we shall be certain to

conquer. I am heartily glad to have come here to-day, Mr. Darcy—it will be a golden one in my life ; but we will see each other often. I must go now, so I shall say good-bye.'

Darcy mechanically stretched out his hand, for since he had arisen he seemed like one in a dream. Father John shook the proffered hand with feigned ecstasy, and went on his way.

When he had gone, Darcy walked down slowly in the direction of his stables. His mind was in a state of excitement, and he felt that he must do something to give it relief. He called to Tom, who was some distance away. Tom came.

'Saddle a horse for me as quickly as you can,' he commanded.

'Which wan, sur?' Tom asked.

'Firefly,' Darcy replied.

'Firefly, is it?' exclaimed Tom, with astonishment.

'Why, he's hardly broken-in yet ; he'll brake ivery bone in yer body if ye thry to ride him. Shure, it was only this mornin' he threw Paddy Davy ; an' it's hard work we had to get him caught ; and afther that he's as wild as wild can be.'

'Didn't you hear what I said?' asked Darcy, sternly. 'I told you to saddle Firefly, and if you are afraid to do it, I'll do it myself.'

This was too much for Tom. Without a word, he went quickly into the stables, and having taken down the saddle, he threw it over Firefly's back, regardless of that animal's peculiarities. Firefly at once became restive, laid his ears back, and lashed out with his hind-feet. A string of choice oaths flowed from Tom at this display,

which evidently so much astonished even the brute, that he immediately surrendered, and permitted himself to be handled with impunity.

As soon as Firefly was led out, Darcy vaulted into the saddle; in a moment he had got his feet into the stirrups, and had given the astonished animal a cut with his whip, and then they were off. Down the avenue the powerful hunter thundered, out on the main road, and then, Darcy having turned his head, right across the country. Dikes, stone walls and double ditches were taken at a gallop. Through herds of wondering cattle and flocks of terrified sheep, Firefly held on with unabated speed, now and again varying his pace by sudden curvetings and kickings. At length he began to show signs of fatigue, and finally he dropped into an ordinary canter.

His rider by this time was in a better humour; the wild freedom of a cross-country gallop had raised his spirits, and the thought that he had conquered the horse flattered his vanity.

He now turned Firefly's head homewards, and rode along leisurely, occasionally bending forward to stroke his horse's neck. A beggar was at the gate as he rode through, who wished him all the blessings of her hypocritical vocabulary. Darcy threw her a crown, and went on whistling.

Tom met him at the stables; the shade had not gone off his face yet. His master jumped nimbly off his horse.

'There's no better horse, Tom, anywhere, and we ought to be proud of him,' he said. 'Why, Tom, he never even knocked a stone off, and as for double ditches, he topped them grandly.'

This raised Tom's spirits.

'Ay, sur,' he said, 'and whin nixt sazon comes, I'll bet me breeches that ne'er a horse will be before him at the finish.'

He then walked Firefly slowly about, while Darcy, with his arms a-kimbo, stood looking on admiringly. When Firefly was cooled sufficiently, they both inspected the other horses—not but what they had done it often before, but horses are such uncertain animals, you never know when a spavin or some other objectionable feature may develop itself. They enjoyed in imagination the triumphs of the hunting season, which was now fast approaching. Tom being, as he said, morally certain that no such horses could possibly be put into the field, Darcy was in high spirits.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### NEIGHBOURS.

'Trooping from their mouldy dens  
The chapfallen circle spreads  
Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
Hollow hearts and empty heads.'

A. TENNYSON.

'I THINK, Tom,' said Darcy, 'I'll drive over to Captain Gore's to-night; he asked me to drop in some night.'

'All right, sur,' Tom replied. 'There's that brown horse rottin' away for somethin' to do; the six mile spin 'll jusht ile his jints for him.'

Captain Gore was dubbed 'Captain' because he was

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Captain Gore was dubbed 'Captain' because he was

an officer in the militia; he had a small estate which barely supported him, as his habits were not economical. He was a fine-looking man, and always dressed well; he passed the greater part of his time away from Ireland, and he made a great virtue of the fact that he always returned when the hunting season was about to begin.

The road to his house from Darcy's led through a wild but beautiful part of the country. As they drove along, the farmers on each side, busy in the fields, saluted Darcy, and he returned their greetings with a heartiness which they evidently admired.

Just where Darcy's estate ended they began to ascend, till at length they reached the summit of a hill, a few hundred feet high. There Darcy made Tom pull up, the view was so lovely. They looked back into a valley bounded on all sides by mountains; the farthest part of it was in shade, and with its masses of trees, as well as the dark hues of the mountain, formed a fitting background for the rest, which was lighted by the sun. The village, nestling among the trees in the centre of the valley, glowed to the very pinnacle of the church steeple; two silver threads wound through the valley, and met below the village mill, the one stream roaming over rocks and falling down miniature precipices; the other, slow and deep, seemed as if awaiting its boisterous neighbour, till the haste of the one, checked by the solemnity of the other, and the sloth of the one stimulated by the activity of its companion, they should flow on together to the sea.

Darcy's heart was glad. 'It is all mine!' he thought. 'There is one spot, at least, in Ireland where justice shall be done.'

When they had descended the hill, they began to note a marked change in the appearance of the farmers' houses ; for while on Darcy's side of the hill they were neatly thatched and whitewashed, here the majority of them had been allowed to get into such a wretched condition, that the roofs in many places were bulged in, and were covered with moss and grass, from which green streams ran down the walls in damp weather. The farmers themselves were more negligent in their clothes on this side than on that ; even the landscape was different. Here stunted trees threw out their skeleton arms to the heavens as if craving for nourishment.

'It is curious,' said Darcy, 'but till to-day I have never noticed the great difference there is between both sides of that hill. I wonder what can be the cause ?'

'The cause is known well enough, sur,' said Tom. 'On your side av the hill the farmers are more secure. It has been the custom in yer honour's family for many ginerations to change yer tenants as seldom as you possibly could. The farmers know that although their lase may run out, yet their farms will not be taken from dhim, but be given to dhim again on rasonable terms ; so that, ye see, sur, they come to look on their farms as their own property almosht. Whativer work they do on it they know will binifit their families in some way or other. If a farmer dies, you give the farm to his son on the same condition the father had it. If the farmer wishes to lave the counthry, you allow him to git as good a tinant in his place as he can, and to make a few pounds by sellin' his intherest in it to the new-comer, so that it is to his intherest to make his farm be as good

as possible. You are no loser by this, sur,' continued Tom, 'for yer farms, whenever there is wan to let, will rint at double that av the nagers on this side. Here, as soon as the lase is up, they are turned out av their houldin's, so that no wan feels sicare. There's Micky Davy,' said Tom, pointing in the direction of a delapidated-looking house, 'it's two years yit till his lase is out; but he tould me that if the flood was to come agin, divil a bit av thatch he'll put on his house. But he's savin' up ivery pinny he can, sur. It may be a sacrit, but I'll vinture to tell you, sur. You know ould Paddy Feeny is a tinant av yours. Well, he hasn't a sowl to lave the farm to, and in the natural coorse av things he can't last very long. Well, sur, Micky has his eye on that farm, and if he succeeds in gettin' it, I'll go bail for him that there won't be a nater farm on yer estate.'

Darcy laughed heartily at this tale of Tom's.

'We shall see, Tom,' he said. 'That's waiting for dead men's shoes with a vengeance.'

The conversation went no further in this direction, for they were nearing Captain Gore's. Soon they came to the lodge-gates, or rather, what had been at one time the lodge-gates. There was certainly something like a small house near the gate, but it had no roof; there were also a few wooden poles placed across where the gate ought to be. Whether these combined can be dignified by the name 'lodge-gate' is open to doubt.

Tom had to alight to take down the bars before they could get through.

The avenue to the house was overgrown with grass and weeds, and when they got to the house, they could

dimly guess that there had at one time been gravel before it. The grass was here, the grass was there, the grass was all around.

Darcy knocked at the door, but not too hard, lest it might tumble down bodily. He waited a considerable time. At length he heard a step, and Captain Gore himself opened the door. He looked like a counterfeit diamond in a skull, he was so dressed and bejewelled and the house was such a skeleton of a place.

‘Oh, Mr. Darcy!’ he exclaimed, stretching out both hands; ‘glad to see you, my dear fellow!—very glad. Come in and take off your coat. Mahoney was here half an hour ago, but I’ll send for him again.’

Mahoney was what we call a gentleman farmer. On one hundred acres of land he could outvie Darcy himself in his horses and general style of living.

‘There are a few others whom I’ll send for to give you a welcome,’ the captain continued. ‘In the meantime let us walk round to the stables.’

Darcy was nothing loth, so they went out.

Captain Gore sent the messengers off, and then began to dilate on his horses, his garden, his cattle, in fact, everything about the house. No mention was made of the broken down gate-house and gate, or of the avenue overgrown with grass. No; the man might be a duke, the way he talked; Darcy could not edge a word into the conversation from the time they left the house till they entered it again.

The messengers soon returned. The various gentlemen to whom they were sent were highly honoured, and would be with Mr. Darcy and Captain Gore as soon as possible.

In a few hours they began to arrive, Mahoney trying to mimic the captain in his pompousness. Then there was Harry Blunt, the proprietor of a small estate close to Captain Gore's. He was known to be the best gentleman rider about those parts, and fortunate was the owner who got Blunt to ride for him at the local races, for if Harry Blunt could not get first to the post by fair means, he generally managed to do it somehow. He always had a gang of scoundrels in his pay on the course, who did all in their power by a shower of sticks and stones to balk the horse that might be before him. He once, however, was caught in his own trap, for the horse he was riding got terrified, and having bolted, threw him and rolled over him.

There was also a shabby-looking man, dressed in black. He had once been a clergyman, but from a cause unnecessary to relate he had given up his profession.

They all, except Gore, seemed rather awkward in Darcy's company. Notwithstanding various efforts, Mahoney could not bring himself to speak to Darcy as to an equal, and two or three times, when Darcy asked him a question he had replied with 'Yes, sir,' and 'No, sir,' and immediately afterwards cursed himself in his own mind for his folly.

They were sitting round a roaring fire in a shabby room; the conversation turned on the crops, the weather, and the hunting season; it seemed to come in spasmodic gushes. Darcy would ask for information about some hunting custom, and straightway two or three would commence at the same time to answer him; then an awkward silence would ensue.

At length Captain Gore, after being absent from the room for some time, came in.

'Darcy, my dear fellow, you'll have a drop of something after your drive over? I am afraid you'll be thinking me very inhospitable.'

'Oh, many thanks,' Darcy replied, 'but I don't drink, I can assure you, Gore. I'm enjoying myself very much; these gentlemen are giving me very valuable information.'

When Darcy said he did not drink, Harry Blunt jumped off his chair, and was about to roll out a string of oaths, but suddenly recollecting himself, he pretended to have suddenly felt a twinge of gout. Mahoney opened his mouth and eyes in astonishment, and the ex-parson looked pityingly at him, as much as to say, 'You, a young man, master of your own resources—oh, what a blessing you leave unused!'

Captain Gore alone kept his countenance.

'Well, you know, my dear fellow,' he explained, 'it is thought hospitable to offer one's guests some refreshments. I don't care for it myself, but one must go with the world.'

'Oh, certainly,' said Darcy; 'you are quite right. I would be sorry to wish to place the restraint on another that I do on myself. If it does any one good, let him have it by all means; but for myself, I must say I feel very much better without it.'

'The parson here,' said Captain Gore, 'has often told us the same thing.'

Just then the servant came in with a jug of punch. Captain Gore poured glasses out for Blunt and Mahoney.

'Parson, I know you'll not have any, so it's no use asking you,' he said, as he placed the jug on the table.

A few minutes after he beckoned the parson to go outside. When there, he said :

'Now, look here, parson, promise me you'll not touch a drop to-night.'

'Can't I have one glass ?—only one ?' implored the parson.

'No, not a drop, while he is here, or else we shall disgust him, and he won't come again. Blunt and Mahoney can stand a glass, but you, when you have got one, would go to the devil for another.'

'All right then,' said the parson ; ' take the jug away and make those fools swallow theirs quickly, or I'll not be able to stand it.'

'You'll have a rubber of whist ?' asked Captain Gore, when he returned to the room.

'I shall be very glad,' said Darcy ; 'I am very fond of a rubber.'

Blunt and Mahoney looked very pleased at this. There was something he could do.

'Then that will be just right,' said the captain, 'as the parson doesn't play.'

The parson scowled, but said nothing. Mahoney suggested that they should play for a small stake, just to put interest in the game : they all agreed to it. Darcy played eagerly, and enjoyed the game exceedingly ; but Blunt and Mahoney yawned a great deal during it, and seemed to think the small coins which they occasionally got quite beneath their notice.

After a time, Blunt suggested that they should change the game to loo and stake higher.

‘On no account, Blunt,’ said Captain Gore ‘when you come to my house you must keep within bounds, and not make a fool of yourself.’

‘I merely thought,’ said Blunt apologetically, ‘that the change might be acceptable to Mr. Darcy.’

‘Oh, thank you,’ said Darcy, ‘I thoroughly enjoy the game we are at.’

After a time, Captain Gore, seeing the disgust growing deeper and deeper on the faces of Blunt and Mahoney, remarked that they had better cease playing, as it was getting late. Darcy pulled out his watch.

‘I had no idea that it was so late,’ he said; why, it’s after eleven. I must be off.’

‘Let us have a song first,’ said Blunt. ‘Mahoney can sing a capital song.’

Mahoney blushed. ‘He would try, but feared he was rather hoarse.’

They roused the parson, who had fallen asleep, and asked him to play the accompaniment to the song.

He rubbed his eyes; and going to a jingling piano on three legs, which stood in a corner, banged out the tune of the celebrated hunting-song, ‘John Peel.’

Mahoney placed himself in an attitude in the middle of the room, and bawled out the song, totally regardless of the accompaniment.

The swing of the music exhilarated them all. The captain kept time to it by swinging his arms through the air, while Darcy did the same by tapping with his fingers on the table. Blunt fancied he kept time by stamping on the floor.

As all joined in the last chorus, the servant announced that Mr. Darcy’s carriage was waiting. They finished

the chorus, then, amidst hand-shaking and hopings that he would visit them again, Darcy left. Tom was waiting, and they drove home quickly and in silence.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### A VISITOR.

‘Ill comes disguised in many forms.’

J. MILLER.

THE next morning, Darcy was somewhat late in coming downstairs. When at length he did so, a letter was awaiting him. When he had read it, he held it a long time in his hand, and then read it over and over again. It ran thus : ‘The executive beg to inform you that they have deputed Mr. John Gaunt to wait on you and to give you assistance in the organisation of your district. He will be with you in a few days.’ There was no post-mark on the envelope ; it had evidently come in some other way.

The uncereemonious note quite jarred on Darcy’s feelings.

‘What right have they to dispose of me in this way?’ he asked himself. ‘Am I a slave that I must do everything they require?’

Oppressed with bitter thoughts, he stamped about the room. Then the meaning of the oath he had taken began to dawn upon him.

’Tis ever so. How few realise the subsequent effects of their actions, the train of consequences which follow

us through the years ! Darcy thought of his oath, and tried to persuade himself that his obedience was necessary in order to secure the glorious end, the redemption of his country.

‘But what must I do with this Gaunt ?’ he asked himself. ‘People, especially the police, will want to know all about him.’ He rang the bell. ‘Send in Tom,’ he said to the servant. Tom came in.

‘Tom,’ said Darcy, ‘I want you to help me with your advice. I have a friend coming to see me, who will probably stay a tolerable length of time. Now, as he is a stranger, and the police are getting very inquisitive, they will perhaps give us some annoyance. I want you to put them off the scent.’

‘Can’t ye tell me where he comes from, and a little more about him, dhin maybe I can help you.’

‘I can’t, Tom,’ Darcy replied despondingly ; ‘he is comin’ here on private business, and that is about all I know of him.’

‘Don’t you know his name, sur ?’ asked Tom.

Darcy thought a moment to see whether it would be prudent to tell his name ; but when he considered that Gaunt had disclosed it to him, before he had joined the society, he thought there could not be any harm in telling it.

‘His name is Gaunt, Tom—John Gaunt.’

‘Well, I’ll think over it,’ said Tom. ‘Is he comin’ soon ?’

‘In a day or two,’ Darcy replied.

That evening, Tom might be seen riding into the village and calling at a great many shops. At length,

as he went from one shop to another, leading his horse, he met what he wanted, a policeman.

There were only five altogether in the place; and Tom knew them all, and they knew him to be a steady, well-conducted man.

‘Good-night to you, Misther Hegarty,’ said Tom. ‘It’s very dark in these streets av yours.’

‘Oh, good-night, sur,’ said the policeman. ‘I scarcely knew you; what brings you out at this hour?’

‘They ran short av somethin’ at the house,’ replied Tom, ‘and as all the shtable boys war away at a dance, I thought I would take a ride for a bit av exercise. Be the holy poker,’ exclaimed Tom, ‘but it’s cowl’d.’

‘It is so,’ said the policeman, ‘fearfully cowl’d.’

‘Troth, it’s seldom I inther the door av a public-house,’ said Tom, ‘but this night makes me wish for a hot jug av punch.’

‘There’s no place you can get it as good as at the Darcy Arms,’ remarked the policeman. ‘Besides, ye can put yer horse up there while yer havin’ it.’

Tom bent his head forward. ‘Wouldn’t yerself like a dhrop?’ he asked.

The policeman looked hurriedly up and down the street, and then nodded assent. ‘I’ll be there before you,’ he said, and then walked leisurely down a back street.

When Tom had put his horse up, and had gone into the inn, the landlady beckoned to him, and showed him to a room upstairs. There was Mr. Hegarty warming himself at the fire with the jug of punch ready waiting for Tom.

'This is somethin' like comfort,' remarked Tom, as he poured out the hot liquid.

'You'd say that, sur, if you had to walk about those wretched streets,' assented the policeman. 'And how is the young masther gettin' on?' he asked, after a pause.

'Oh, pretty well, pretty well,' Tom answered, 'but,' he continued, leaning forward toward the policeman, and speaking in a confidential tone, 'he needs experience—he is like one who doesn't know what to do with himself at present.'

'Oh, I see, I see!' assented Mr. Hegarty, copying Tom's confidential voice.

'But I'm glad he's gettin' some wan to be with him for company's sake,' said Tom.

'Not gettin' married?' asked the policeman.

'Oh no; he's only having an ould frind to shtay with him for some time. This frind av his, ye see, has been hard up, and whin the masther came into his property, "Damn it," said he, "what's the use av all this if I can't binifit a frind with some av it?"'

'He did, did he?' asked Mr. Hegarty, delighted.

'Throth he did,' Tom replied; 'but when he thought how he could do somethin' for his frind, he was in a fix. If he offered him money he knew that it would insult him, for he's a gintleman every inch av him, so at lasht he hit on the plan av askin' his frind to visit him, and throth, when the masther gits hould av him he'll not let him go in a hurry.'

'He's wan av the right soort,' remarked the policeman.

'Throth, you may say that,' Tom assented, as he

emptied his glass. When he finished it he hurriedly pulled out his watch: 'How the toime does fly!' he exclaimed; 'I hope you'll excuse me, Misther Hegarty, but I musht be home at half-past tin, and I havn't much toime to spare.'

'Well, good-night, sur; I'm happy to have the pleasure av meetin' you.'

'Good-night, Misther Hegarty; I'm sure I'm obliged to ye,' said Tom, as he rose to go.

'Anything to report, Hegarty?' asked the sergeant, that night, as Hegarty stood at the top of a row of four men, and as the sergeant had got his book ready to enter their reports.

'As I was on duty this evenin',' said Hegarty, 'I saw comin' down the sthreet Masther Darcy's sarvant, Tom. "Throth," says I to meself, "Tom is a knowin' chap. I'll ask him a question or two."'

The others listened intently.

"Good-night, sur," said I.—"Good-night," kindly says he. He was ladin' his horse by the way. "I'm goin' your way a bit," said I, "and I'll keep yer company, if you've no objection."—"I'll be glad av yer company," said he. Well, we walked along, talkin' av wan thing and another. At linth I asked him how the masther was. "Oh, divil a betther!" said he; "but he's a thrifle lonely sometimes." "Get him a wife," says I, but he didn't seem to see the joke. "He'll be havin' company soon," said he. "Oh, then, will he?" said I. "Throth, he will," said he. "And who may he be goin' to have?" said I; for I was determined to get it out av him.'

At this point of the recital even the sergeant's face showed signs of curiosity.

"He's an ould frind av his," says he. "Where from?" said I. "Throth, I don't know," says he; "he met him at college, I think. Anyhow, he's goin' to stay a long toime with him." "Oh, indeed! how long?" said I.—"Oh, a couple av months," said he, "or a year or two for that matther."—"Throth, that's quare," said I. "Well, you see," said he, "he's been a very ould frind av the masther's, and now he's very hard up, for divil a copper has he that he can call his own."—"Throth, I pity him," said I. "Well," said he, "what do yes think? but the masther is goin' to ashk him for a visit."—"Well?" said I. "And whin he's got him," says he, "he means to keep him to live with him till somethin' turns up for him to do."—"Throth, yer masther is wan av the right soort!" said I. "No wonder yer proud av him." Dhin he asked me to give him a lift, and off he wint.'

'Well,' asked the sergeant, 'what then?'

'That's all, sur,' said Hegarty.

The sergeant got into a towering rage.

'Hegarty!' he exclaimed, 'if it weren't that you are a young officer, I'd report you this very night to headquarters. You're incapable, sir! you're a damned fool, sir!—to take up the valuable time of your superior officer with a report of that sort! Stay up to-night till you have copied six special reports. That may teach you your duty. Set to it at once!'

Hegarty slunk away to his task, and vowed in his own mind that he would cut his reports very short in the future.

Tom met one of the other policemen next day.

'I don't know whether I ought to talk to you,' he said laughingly. 'You got Hegarty into a nice scrape yesterday.'

'How's that?' asked Tom.

'Oh, he thought that something you and he were talking about was important enough to go into a report, so he told it to the sergeant, who swore at him for his stupidity. But he's young. He'll soon know better.'

Tom then knew that the bait was taken, and that his master's friend would not now be watched. He told Darcy what he had heard, and thus set his mind at ease.

In a day or two a letter came, stating by what train Gaunt was coming. Darcy sent Tom with the carriage to meet him. When they arrived from the station, Darcy went out to meet his visitor, and welcomed him like an old friend. When they were inside, he took the first opportunity of telling Gaunt of the story which Tom had fabricated.

'You must try to act up to it,' he said.

'You have taken a great weight off my mind,' said Gaunt. 'I pictured myself hiding all day and going about cautiously all night, but this is much better. Of course, I would willingly have done anything for the good of the cause.'

'Oh, of course!' said Darcy, interrupting him. 'I'll show you to your rooms.'

So saying, he led the way upstairs. He showed Gaunt into a comfortably furnished room, in which the fire was burning brightly. A well-filled book-case stood at one

end, and a neat writing-table was placed at the window, from which a fine view of the park surrounding the house could be had, with a mountain-range in the distance. A door led out of this room to another, which Gaunt was told was his bedroom.

'These rooms will be at your absolute disposal,' said Darcy. 'You can receive your friends here, write your letters, and transact any business you may find it necessary to do.'

'I'm sure I'm eternally obliged to you, Mr. Darcy,' Gaunt said. 'Such comfort I never dreamt of! Such a simple plan, too! You are indeed worthy to be the head of this district!'

'I'll leave you to brush yourself up after your journey,' Darcy said, not noticing the compliment.

'Very comfortable! very comfortable indeed!' Gaunt soliloquised, when Darcy had gone. 'Remarkably comfortable!' he went on. 'But the worst of it is, I shall have to turn out of it some day. You're not a bad sort of fellow, John Darcy,' he muttered, as he threw himself into an arm-chair before the glowing fire. 'I have met worse in my time; but for all that, if I ever get the chance of putting you out of the way, without bringing my own neck into danger, you may look out—that's all!'

He then sat looking into the fire with an uneasy expression on his face.

'Damn it!' he exclaimed, jumping up, 'I hate this sort of work! Fawning on Colonel This and Major That, and God knows who, to get a living! Curse them all! I'm as good as themselves!'

He was silent some time as he stood before the fire.

‘Lord,’ he said at length, ‘if I had this place, what a stir I’d make in the country! I’d show them how to live! What a fool this Darcy is! One would imagine the world was made for his swinish tenants. Curse them! if ever I get this place, I’ll let them know who is master!’

A knock at the door aroused him. The servant announced that dinner was waiting for him. He hastily washed his hands, and gave himself a superficial going-over; then descended to dinner. He entered the dining-room with a smile.

‘I feel quite refreshed now. Many thanks to you, Mr. Darcy,’ he said.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### PRELIMINARIES.

‘Fill the can and fill the cup,  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up  
And is lightly laid again.’

A. TENNYSON.

NEXT day Darcy thought it prudent to ride through the village with Gaunt. Darcy was very considerate to him, pointing out the various objects of interest in the neighbourhood, at which Gaunt professed himself much surprised and gratified.

When they returned from their ride, they had a visit from Father John. He had come to make the acquaintance of Mr. Gaunt, and to make inquiries as to their

future operations. Gaunt had the commands of the executive with him. A general meeting was to be held at once, at which Father John was to introduce Mr. Darcy as the new head of the district and Gaunt as the organising secretary.

‘How soon can you hold it?’ asked Gaunt.

Father John was of opinion that a few days would be sufficient to send round word.

‘But where can we have it?’ Darcy inquired.

‘Oh, leave that to me,’ Father John replied. ‘It will all depend on the route the police take for their patrol that night; and I can find out before then; or, at any rate, I can put them on the wrong scent.’

‘How can you manage that?’ asked Darcy.

‘Well, you see,’ said Father John, ‘Sergeant Fahy in the village and I are great friends, and I often talk to him of the great pain which these secret societies inflict on the priests. “Sergeant Fahy,” I say sometimes, “I have heard from a private source that these blackguards are going to have a meeting to-night. I don’t want any of my flock to get into trouble, but I would take it as a favour if you would go over and disperse them before they actually begin.” They are supposed,’ said Father John, in explanation, ‘to often get up a dance, or some diversion that no one can object to, and then wind up with a meeting. There will be nothing easier than to get a few of the boys to get up a dance, anywhere you wish. The sergeant, to oblige me, and to gain credit for himself, takes his three men and marches off to the dance, leaving one man behind to guard the barracks. Then of course we go in the opposite direction, and hold our meeting.’

Darcy and Gaunt laughed heartily at this plan of Father John's, though Darcy did not quite approve of his method ; it was for the good of the cause, however. It was then decided that the meeting should be in a few days, and that Father John should let them know the meeting-place.

Gaunt, in the interval, spent a great part of his time in correspondence, which he wrote in a peculiar kind of secret writing.

Darcy was in a state of excitement for those few days, for he knew that he was expected to stimulate the meeting by his speech ; he was accordingly preparing it. He wrote out the headings of his discourse ; then tore them up as not satisfactory. He also commenced to write out his speech in full, having some vague idea that he could learn it before the time came ; but when he had covered a sheet or two, he gave it up in despair. The evening before the meeting, he was puzzling his brain in a similar fashion. At length he determined to leave it alone, and trust for his words to the inspiration of the moment.

He went into his library to look for a book to divert his thoughts ; his eye fell on Shakespeare ; he took it down, and turned over the leaves. He had read Shakespeare now and then in a cursory sort of way, but he had never really studied it. He glanced at 'As You Like It.' It did not seem to suit his humour. 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' was passed over almost as soon as he had looked at it. The next he came to was 'Julius Cæsar.' He read a part of it ; then sat down, and continued reading. It was evident he was enjoying it. Suddenly he stopped and rang the bell. 'Send Tom

in,' he said to the servant, so necessary was it for him to have someone to share his pleasures.

Tom came in. Darcy often sent for Tom to give him directions about different things, but on this occasion he told him to sit down.

'Tom,' he said, 'I want you to listen to me while I read this. It is called "Julius Cæsar," written by Shakespeare.'

'Oh, I've heard of him,' Tom replied.

'It's a play. You have never seen a play, I suppose, Tom?'

Tom shook his head.

'The first scene is in a street of Rome.'

'Where the Pope lives?' asked Tom.

'Yes, I believe he does live there,' Darcy replied. 'Enter Flavius, Marullus, and a rabble of citizens.'

'Be the holy!' Tom exclaimed, 'what quare names they've got.'

Darcy went on reading. 'What trade art thou? Why, sir, a carpenter. Where is thy leathern apron and thy rule?'

'Throth, he's jokin' the carpenther,' said Tom. 'Sure no wan but a blacksmith or a shoemaker wears a leather apron.'

'Tom, you really must not interrupt me,' said Darcy, scarcely suppressing a smile; 'you must let me read on, and when I have got to the end you may make any remarks you wish.'

Darcy read on and Tom was silent, but now and again, he showed his opinion of the characters by sundry shakings of his head and contortions of his face; at

length, when the plot became more clear, he jumped up from his chair.

‘Oh, the scoundhrils!’ he exclaimed, ‘they’re goin’ to murther him. Oh, bad luck to dhim!’

‘Tom, don’t be a fool,’ said Darcy, petulantly. ‘Cæsar was the greatest wretch that ever walked the earth; he was a tyrant, and would crush every particle of freedom out of their hearts if he could, or if they gave him time to do it. They deserved to be slaves if they suffered such a fiend to live!’

‘But the book doesn’t make him out that bad,’ said Tom, apologetically.

‘But he was that bad,’ said Darcy, ‘it’s a well known fact.’

‘Well, why doesn’t the book say so all at wanst, and be done with it,’ Tom remarked, giving up his point, as he saw that Darcy was not very well pleased.

Darcy read on, and Tom did not interrupt him again, except when he was reading where Cæsar says to Anthony, ‘Yond’ Cassius has a lean and hungry look; he thinks too much: such men are dangerous.’ Tom gave a start, but said nothing. ‘Gaunt,’ he thought, ‘that’s Gaunt.’

The fact was that Gaunt, even in the short time since he had come to Darcy’s, had made himself obnoxious to the servants one and all, for behind Darcy’s back he ordered them about like so many dogs.

Again, when Darcy read where Portia tries to get Brutus’s secret from him, an involuntary, ‘Och, the darlin’,’ broke from Tom.

When Darcy got thus far, he was interrupted by a knock; someone wanted him on business.

‘We will finish it some other time, Tom,’ he said.

It was Father John, who wanted to see Darcy. He had come to make the final arrangements about the meeting. It was to be held in the Cave of Gare.

On the following evening Father John anticipated a very large gathering; they were coming from all parts of the country, he said, to receive their new leader; he had also made sure that the police would not interrupt them, for he had heard that they were going to make a raid on some illicit whisky-shops on the other side of the parish.

Gaunt was brought down from his sanctum to join in the deliberations, and when he had heard Father John’s arrangements, he congratulated the worthy priest on his success in smoothing their way.

When Father John was leaving, he asked Gaunt to go with him to his house, and help him to arrange matters, issue notices, etc. Gaunt was glad of the offer, for he was getting rather dismal at Darcy’s, where he always had to be formal and abstemious.

When they got inside of Father John’s house, the owner seemed to become another man.

‘Make yourself at home, make yourself at home, my dear fellow,’ he said. ‘Take your coat off. Hang your hat up here; and now go into the room while I find you a pair of slippers.’

A cheerful fire shot its sparkling rays over the room. Gaunt entered with delighted surprise—surprise at seeing the priest divest himself of his outdoor character as easily as of his overcoat—delight at the thought that he had found a congenial companion.

Father John soon came with the slippers. He now

had on, instead of his long black coat, a short loose one which gave freer motion to his limbs, and showed off to perfection his rotund figure. He wheeled an arm-chair to the fire, and took Gaunt playfully by the shoulders, and pushed him into it; he then disappeared, and in a few minutes reappeared with a small tray and two tumblers, and a jug of hot water, a lemon, and a sugar-basin. These he placed on a small table, which he brought up to Gaunt's elbow, he then went to a cupboard and took out a bottle labelled 'whisky;' this also he placed on the aforesaid table. Again he went to the cupboard: this time he brought two long clay pipes and a packet of tobacco; he then locked the door, drew the blinds, closed the shutters, and finally sat down puffing in a second arm-chair.

'There,' he said; 'that's what I call comfortable, my friend; that's how we do things down here!'

'It's an example worthy of all imitation,' said Gaunt, as he poured out some whisky.

'Darcy is a good sort of a fellow,' remarked Father John; 'his head is in the right place, and he has plenty of money, but he doesn't know how to enjoy life. Why, he never offered to join me in a glass all the times I have been to his house.'

'You are right, Father John,' said Gaunt, who entirely concurred with the opinion expressed. 'It makes a house so infernally cold, not to have a drop of some sort at hand; but, as you said,' Gaunt went on, 'Darcy is not a bad sort of a fellow after all; his enthusiasm for the cause is only equalled by our own.'

'Right, quite right, my friend!' assented Father John. 'We, who have given up our comfort and

worldly prosperity for the good of the cause, must indeed have a strong belief in its justice and nobleness, and in the eventual victory of its principles. I may take my own case: the bishop himself told me that I missed being made an archdeacon through being suspected of mixing myself up with the society. "But, bishop," said I, "you belong to it yourself." "That may be the case," said he, "but I have not been found out, and you have; if you are not fit to keep yourself from suspicion, you are not fit to be an archdeacon." Wasn't that a queer saying for a bishop?

'Very queer,' Gaunt assented. It was now his turn to tell of his sacrifices for the cause. 'I was rapidly making a fortune in America,' he said, 'when the news of the oppression of my country forced itself on my mind; I left everything, joined the society, and worked myself up to the position I now hold in it. In furthering its interests I have spent my fortune, but I don't care a rap for it, if only the cause succeeds.'

'You are from America, then,' Father John remarked.

To tell the truth, Father John's sole reason for bringing Gaunt to his house was to find out who he was. This was a point gained: he came from America.

'Were there many of the brotherhood there?' asked Father John.

'Oh, they are scattered over all parts; of course, in the large towns there are thousands. In the town where I was we had ten lodges, and some of them had as many as two thousand members.'

'Ah! then, you don't say so!' exclaimed Father John. 'What a power of a lot! And where may that town be?' he asked, innocently.

Gaunt named the town.

This was point number two gained; for, though Father John could see that Gaunt was lying with regard to his fortune, yet, from the unhesitating way that he answered his questions, he could see that he told the truth about the other matters. He thought it wise not to question him any more just then; so he changed the subject.

‘Fill up your glass, my friend; don’t stint yourself here; you’re not at Darcy’s now. By the way, I am very anxious to see how Darcy gets on to-morrow night; his future influence all depends on that, for my sensitive countrymen are governed by their first impressions in such cases: if once they make up their minds on a subject, it takes the devil—I mean a deal of persuasion—to make them change it.’

‘That’s not generally supposed,’ Gaunt remarked.

He was really enjoying his pipe and his whisky so much that he did not care to enter into a lengthy conversation.

‘But it’s true, all the same,’ Father John replied. ‘You’ll find it so if you come to have dealings with them—so be prepared.’

Gaunt did not reply. There was silence for some minutes, as each looked into the fire and blew great volumes of smoke from their mouths.

‘Is Darcy very rich?’ Gaunt asked suddenly.

Father John gave a start.

‘You really frightened me,’ he said, ‘by the way you said that! Rich?—well, yes—he is what you may call snug and comfortable. His father was not a spend-thrift, and his uncle did not spend more than he could

help, so I think if you and I, Gaunt, had just the one half Darcy has in the bank, we'd be out of poverty for the rest of our lives—not but that we may deserve it just as much as he does.'

'I should think so,' said Gaunt, with a sneer; 'damn him!' he continued, getting up and walking about the room. 'What has he done that he should be so well off—the young fool! When he has got it, he doesn't know what to do with it.'

'Suppose we teach him?' Father John insinuated, holding out his hand. Gaunt clasped it.

'Now you've said it, Father John!' he asserted; 'now you've said it!'

'Sit down—sit down!' Father John said; 'you are the secretary, you know,' he continued. 'All orders come through you now.' Father John looked at him inquiringly: Gaunt understood the look.

'I see—I see!' he said; 'I think we can do it.'

'There is no doubt about it,' said Father John.

Both men gazed into the fire again; when Gaunt looked up from his reverie he saw that Father John was asleep. He waited a few minutes to assure himself of the fact. There was no doubt about it. The burly priest, overcome by the fumes of smoke and whisky, and the heat of the fire, had withdrawn to the shadowy land.

Gaunt got up on tiptoe, and, taking the bottle which stood on the table, held it between his eye and the light. It was yet half full. He took a flask from his pocket, and filled it with the liquor. There was still some left: he raised the bottle to his lips, and finished it. This done, he fixed himself comfortably in his chair and followed the priest's example.

## CHAPTER X.

## A MIDNIGHT TASK.

‘Every young soul, ardent and high, rushing forth finds high  
delight  
In striking with tongue or with pen a stroke for the triumph  
of right.’

L. MORRIS.

DARCY’S frame of mind on the day on which he was to address his countrymen was to be envied. It was a gloomy day; a damp fog hung on tree and grass and window-pane. The wind was still. A great sense of happiness and calmness filled his breast: he felt as if the bustle and worry of life were things very far off. Some holy and inspiring influence overshadowed him. His mother’s face was present to his mind, so gentle—so pure it seemed; the beautiful eyes looked so tenderly and yearningly, that they brought the tears into his own.

The glorious names of heroes, who had dared to do and die for truth and right, rose up before him. Stripped of all their littleness, and visible only in the grandeur of their character, they seemed to him as so many embodiments of all things noble. Scraps of song mingled with these, and jostled each other in his mind—songs of triumph and victory, of joy and of hope. His heart seemed to expand and to be filled with a generous pity for his country; as the heart of one—whom, though born in a Christian land, he dimly knew—yearned over the last days of his fallen race.

At night, Gaunt came to tell him that all was in

readiness, and that it was time they were going. He took Gaunt's hand, and wrung it heartily.

'We go, my friend,' he said, 'to teach liberty to slaves, and to help them break their fetters!'

Gaunt could quickly fall in with anyone's humour.

'We do, Mr. Darcy,' he said with earnestness; 'and I am deeply thankful that I am permitted to have the pleasure and the privilege of attending you on such an occasion.'

'May it be the means of creating in the minds of my countrymen an earnest, unselfish desire to rescue their country from the pit into which it has fallen.'

'Amen—amen!' said Gaunt.

As they passed through Darcy's park on the way to the rendezvous, the moon was high in the heavens; the wind had arisen, and was making music through the trees.

'It is in such a place as this,' said Darcy, as he stopped in his walk, 'that I feel that liberty is the birthright of all men. These aged trees, whose huge shadows lie athwart the grass, seem to shake their sinewy arms in the face of the heavens, exulting in their freedom. Many a time in my boyhood have I come out here, when all the house slept and felt a blessing in their silent companionship. Have you ever felt like that?'

'Well, no; not exactly. I really can't say that I have,' replied Gaunt.

Darcy resumed his walk in silence. After a time they came in view of the mountain to which they were going. It stood up in a black mass against a somewhat brighter sky. Darcy stopped again.

'What puny things we are,' he said, 'in view of such a thing as that!'

'Very small indeed,' Gaunt replied.

'Can any man look on such a sight, and not feel a glow of honest pride when he thinks that man is lord of all these mighty things!'

'Scarcely,' replied Gaunt. They resumed their walk.

Gaunt's replies had somewhat damped Darcy's ardour, without the latter being aware of it. They arose, not from designedness in Gaunt, but from sheer inability to grasp Darcy's meaning and to frame a fitting reply. It was beyond his depth.

When they got to the foot of the mountain, they had to leave the highroad and to take to bye-paths. They had not gone far in one of these, when a voice challenged them. Gaunt gave the pass-word. Thereupon a dark form jumped from behind the ditch, and, placing himself before them, bade them to follow him. He walked on so rapidly that Darcy and Gaunt could scarcely keep him in view. Several times during the ascent, voices out of the darkness had challenged them, but, upon the pass-word being given, they heard no more of them. After an hour's walking, their guide stopped and waited for them. Gaunt was very much exhausted. Being much older than Darcy, the exercise had been too violent for him. He sat down on a rock, and it was some minutes before he could speak. Darcy was in excellent spirits; the walk had invigorated him, and the mystery of it had restored his enthusiasm.

When Gaunt was rested, the guide went forward. Much to their surprise, they found that they were entering an opening into the mountain. Darcy would

have asked some explanation, but the guide was too far ahead.

After a few minutes' walking, they saw the guide waiting for them, but, as soon as they came up, he went on again, but slower this time, so that they could keep him well in view. He turned sharply to the right, when a voice challenged them again, and in a few minutes more he turned to the left. In a short time a light was seen; and as they approached it, Darcy saw a large irregularly-shaped room, almost filled with men.

The guide led the way towards them, but suddenly he took a narrow path, which eventually brought them into a smaller cave, where they found Father John waiting for them.

'Very glad to see you, sir,' said Father John. 'I suppose you found this farther than you expected, for we have been waiting for some time. But now that you are come we'll begin at once. There is a splendid gathering, a glorious assembly,' he continued, rubbing his hands. 'We have the principal officers of every lodge in the county present.'

'It is indeed a privilege, my friend,' said Darcy, 'to have such an audience. I can never doubt but that liberty is dear to the hearts of our countrymen after this night.' Then seeing that Father John was impatient: 'I'm ready, my friend, and eager to begin if everything is in readiness.'

Darcy had addressed several meetings in the city, when he was at college, but he never realised thoroughly the responsibility he had undertaken till now. Then also he was an advocate of the cause before those whom

he might never see again. Now he was to be the adviser and counsellor of this body of men, and in the work of the society he was to be closely associated with them.

‘All ready?’ inquired Father John.

‘Ready,’ they replied.

‘Then follow me,’ he said.

He led the way out of the apartment they were in, for about twenty yards along a narrow passage, when, on turning to the left, he stepped out on a natural platform, below which were assembled the delegates.

As Father John showed his smiling face, a cheer was given, but when Darcy, following him, stepped on to the platform, a multitude of lusty throats yelled out welcome. Gaunt, too, got a cheer.

The sight that met Darcy’s eyes was not one to be forgotten. Moving through the cave, jostling each other to get near the platform, were at least three hundred stalwart men. Each one had a lantern which he fastened to a stick, and raised above his head in order to throw light upon the platform, or whatever part of the cave he wished to see. The consequence was that now one part was let up, and anon it was in darkness—every moment a different picture presented itself.

Father John stepped to the front of the platform immediately there was silence.

‘My friends,’ he said, ‘a painful yet a pleasant duty has to be done by me to-night. I have been working with you in the good cause for a long time now, but we are becoming so numerous, and the cause is flourishing to such an extent, that the work has become too heavy for me. I asked the council of this society to relieve

me of such a great responsibility, and they have in their wisdom agreed to do so. My heart is sore with the thought of breaking the ties which have held us together so long, but although in the future I'll only be as one of yourselves, I'll never forget day or night to offer, as I have always done, my prayers for the success of the cause. (Cheers.) The pleasant part of my duty is to introduce you to John Darcy, Esq., as your leader, and may he live long to lead us on to victory.' (Loud cheers.)

'Fellow countrymen,' Darcy began, 'it is indeed an honour which I prize more than any other, to be called the leader of such an assembly as I see before me to-night, and I only hope that, whatever the future may have in store for us, I shall have opportunities given to me to show my devotion to my country and my undying aversion to its oppressors. (Cheers.)

'We are met here to-night, and I hope each one will realize it for himself, as sons of a country second to none in the whole annals of the world's history. If we look back along the dim vista of years, we see a land foremost in chivalry and in song, a land pure in faith when other nations were sunk in the degradation of superstition, a land whose greatest crime has been that it has ever, amidst all changes, and in all ages, struggled hard for liberty. Even in her dying struggles, when the clutch of the despot was on her neck, and the dagger to her breast, the name of liberty gurgled in her throat, and sent its echoes to heaven. (Loud cheers.)

'We know who the despot was, we know who the plunderer has been, we know who has stolen our liberty and our birthright, and in the name of heaven we are

met to-night to devise means which shall bring the despot to the ground, which shall strike such terror into the plunderer and the thief that he shall drop his booty and fly for his life. (Cheers.) Courage and patience, my friends, are needed to accomplish this object, we must work quietly and secretly, watch with every nerve strained till the final moment comes, when the chain shall drop from the manacled hands, when starvation shall be unknown, and peace and happiness reign supreme in our wretched country. (Cheers, and "What are we to do?")

'What are you to do? That is simple. We must accumulate arms and ammunition, drill our men into soldiers, and gather funds for such an undertaking as we contemplate. Each of you whom I see before me to-night must see that the rules of the society are strictly carried out in the lodges over which you preside; by so doing you will advance the glorious cause.

'My friends, there have been attempts such as ours before; we know that many a brave heart has rotted away in a living death for seeking liberty, that many a desolate home is in our land to-day, where the wind whistles through the deserted rooms, and the sea bird shrieks over the ruin—and all for liberty. ("Thru for you!")

'I do not mention this to check your enthusiasm, or to damp your ardour. There is no fear of any such fate befalling us, and even if there were, from the men I see before me, I would venture to declare that there are yet brave hearts in Ireland whom the prison walls would never deter from doing their duty. (Loud and prolonged cheers.) But I mention this to show

you the weak point in past attempts like ours. It was this : they were not patient enough—they wanted their country saved all at once.

‘Now, I need not tell you that that was foolish. It is useless, and worse than useless, to make attempts when we are not thoroughly prepared ; I want you all to guard against that mistake : the attempt that we shall make *must* be successful. Everything may be ready in a year or two—if not ready then, we must wait longer. The heads of the society receive reports from all parts of our country, and when they find that everything is in readiness, then, and not till then, the watchword shall be given, which shall make such a noise through the length and breadth of the land that Tyranny will stop her ears and rush to hide her shameless face. (Loud cheers, and a voice : “What about the landlords ?”)

‘Ay, my friends, my countrymen, I grieve to say, but I must say it, that we have enemies to freedom at home as well as abroad, enemies who live amongst us, and feed themselves upon the fat of the land, yet who injure our country on every possible occasion. (A voice, “Down with them !”) My friends, remember my caution—patience ; when the end is attained, the glorious end for which we strive, the land will revert to its rightful owners—the people of Ireland. (Loud cheers.)

‘Can I give to another what does not belong to me ? or if I give it, has he a right to keep it ? Certainly not. The people of Ireland must have their own again, the landlords have no right to it. (Loud cheers.) I am a landlord myself—(a voice, “And a divilish good wan,”)—

but I do not see what real right I have to my property, I look on it as being held in trust for the people of Ireland. When the end is attained, I shall be perfectly willing to give it back to the rightful owners.' (Loud and prolonged cheers.)

Darcy then went on to explain more fully his views on the rights of property; and the meeting expressed its concurrence with his views by frequent expressions of its approval. He then went into the question of religion. In the new state of things, no man's creed was to be interfered with—liberty in everything was to be their motto; this also was highly applauded. At length, after speaking for over an hour, he sat down amidst the greatest enthusiasm.

When the applause had subsided, Gaunt stepped forward with a smirk:

'Boys,' he said, in a jocular manner, 'you don't know me. I don't know whether it's manners to spake to you widhout bein' inthroduced; but I'll chance it' (Laughter, and 'Go on'). 'Me name is John Gaunt; and as nather av the pravius spakers inthroduced me, I may as well tell you who I am. You know, boys,' he went on, 'there are a great many quare things in our society.' (Laughter.) 'Well, I look afther those quare things. You know through whom you get those little bits av information which you heads av lodges need so often. Well, I'm the gossoon you'll get them from in future. I'll get them from headquarters, and dhin you'll have dhim.' (Cheers.) 'In short, I'm sint down here to give ye all the information I can. I'm the secretary. I'll see you often, boys; so there's no need to say any more. You have got a good lader;

and if you don't do somethin' undher him, well the divil fly away with you, and that's all !'

Gaunt retired amid laughter and acclamation. He had put on the brogue on this occasion for effect.

All at once a rushing sound was heard, and presently the guards came running in, breathless and pale.

'The police!—the police!' they exclaimed.

Immediately the meeting was the scene of the wildest confusion. Some ground their teeth and muttered curses, others rushed towards the entrance, while others went down on their knees and cried and prayed.

Darcy alone seemed to maintain his presence of mind: he ran round by the side-passage, and stationed himself at the entrance.

'Back—back, you fools!' he shouted to those who wanted to get out; 'do you want to run into their arms? Put all lights out,' he continued, in a commanding voice. His words calmed them. 'Courage,' he said; 'keep quiet! If they come in, we shall know what to do with them.'

'All keep silent,' he commanded. One man, being too much overcome, was sobbing aloud, 'Oh, my poor wife—oh Mary asthore, I'll never see you more!' he said.

'Whoever is next to that coward, put your hand on his mouth,' shouted Darcy; and at once the unfortunate individual was almost smothered.

All waited in silence for some time. Then Darcy went to reconnoitre.

'All is safe now,' he said, when he came back. 'It must have been a false alarm. I'm deeply grateful to you all,' he continued, 'for coming here to-night, and

I'll not keep you any longer. My friend, Mr. Gaunt, the secretary, will send each of you the necessary instructions. Remember what I said, my friends—have courage and patience, and we shall win the day.'

'Three cheers for our leader,' one man exclaimed; but a very faint cheer was the only response, although they knew that no sound could reach the outer air. They passed out trembling and in silence.

Darcy remained till all had gone. Halfway down the mountain he overtook Gaunt and Father John. They wisely did not refer to the scare, for both had made their way out while Darcy held the meeting in check.

'Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Darcy,' said Father John; 'you have made your mark to-night, sir!'

'You have, indeed!' said Gaunt. 'I never saw such enthusiasm.'

'I'm delighted to hear you say so,' said Darcy, who really felt flattered; 'we have only to keep up the enthusiasm and the cause is sure to succeed.'

'No doubt about it,' said Gaunt. 'Not a particle,' said Father John.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### SHADOWS.

'He seemed a mighty angel, sent from God,  
Standing before us, drunk, a sinful song  
Staining his radiant lips.'

A. SMITH.

WHEN Darcy awoke next day, it was afternoon. The excitement and labour of the previous day had com-

pletely tired him out : he felt low-spirited and wretched ; his enthusiasm of the past night seemed to him unaccountable, and the enthusiasm of the meeting was altogether overshadowed in his mind by the cowardice exhibited near the close of it. He despaired of being able to accomplish anything great with such men. ' If they, the heads of their districts, are such milksops,' he argued, ' what must the common herd be ?'

Filled with these thoughts, he descended from his bedroom, and inquired for Gaunt. The latter had gone out. Breakfast was brought in, but it did not restore his equanimity ; the weather even seemed against him, for the sleet drove past the window. He rang the bell.

' Send in Tom,' he said to the servant. Tom came. ' I want you to drive me over to Captain Gore's,' Darcy said.

Tom looked astonished, but he merely said, ' All right, sur,' and went to get ready ; he saw that Darcy was rather gloomy.

When Tom drove up to the door, Darcy got beside him, and took the reins and whip, contrary to his usual custom. The horse seemed to divine that the lash was about to descend, for he darted off at full speed. This pleased his master, who put the whip up ; the noble animal kept up the same pace till they were ascending the hill, on the way to Captain Gore's, when Darcy let him walk.

Both Tom and his master had been silent so far ; but as they were slowly ascending the hill, suddenly Tom asked :

' Did he tell her, sur ?'

' Tell whom ?' asked Darcy.

‘Portia,’ Tom replied.

His thoughts had reverted to the play; in fact, it had filled his mind ever since Darcy had read part of it to him.

The characters were to him as real as those he met everyday.

The drive by this time had almost cooled Darcy’s feverish spirit, and now this question of Tom came at the proper moment to divert his thoughts. He had begun to relate the rest of the heroic Portia’s history, when, on turning the corner of the road, they met the rector of the parish driving in the opposite direction. Darcy was about to pull up to have a chat with him, when he saw his spiritual adviser lash his horse furiously, and pass by without deigning to notice him, with a haughty, righteous scowl upon his face. The reverend pastor in name had heard that Father John was a constant visitor at Darcy’s house; he had also heard that Darcy visited at Captain Gore’s, and played cards there. He could scarcely believe this last report, but here he found Darcy himself on the road to what he looked upon as a gambling-house. What more was needed to make the holy and pious man sweep past, lest he should defile his garments with such an one? Darcy felt the uncharitable insult keenly. With a muttered curse, he struck the horse, and the noble animal dashed forward furiously.

‘Ye spalpeen!’ Tom kept repeating through his teeth, as he looked back at the rector’s vanishing figure.

When they arrived at Captain Gore’s, lights were seen through the shutters. Hearing the sound of wheels, the captain came to the door.

'Oh, Darcy, my dear fellow, who'd think of seeing you?' he exclaimed. 'I'm heartily glad to see you.'

This was not true. The captain had a cosy party inside, and did not want it broken up.

When Darcy went into the room, the companions of his former visit were there; they did not receive him with great cordiality; their attempts to be gracious only showed the more clearly their real thoughts. The parson looked sulky, Blunt was very obtuse, and Mahoney fidgety. But Darcy did not notice them. He sat down at the table, and poured out some whisky, which he drank off. Blunt and Mahoney eyed each other with astonishment, while the parson took Darcy's hand, and wrung it in token of gratitude.

'Let us have a song, captain,' exclaimed Darcy recklessly; 'something with a chorus, that we can all join in.'

'Mahoney has plenty,' said the captain. 'Come, parson, jingle the piano!'

The parson was assisted to the piano. Mahoney started the song at the top of his voice, and, as was usual with him, he beat the piano by some seconds. The song had a long chorus, but after a few trials they all got into the swing of it. It was

'Some talk of their wine  
Sparkling fresh from the Rhine,  
And their champagne of high degree;  
But away with their wine!  
That's all very fine,  
A glass of good whisky for me!'

As the last line was repeated, it gave an opportunity for each to show his appreciation of the whisky, which

they were not slow to avail themselves of. The parson once even left the piano to take care of itself, in his eagerness to honour the sentiment of the song.

Mahoney's songs had usually about as much sense in them as himself, but to give him credit, he sang them as if he believed they were gems of wisdom.

After the song someone suggested cards, and it was found that a pack was in readiness, and that all were eager to begin. There were too many for whist, as the parson, in somewhat indistinct accents, expressed his determination to play.

'Very well, then,' said the captain, 'shall it be loo?' They all agreed. 'Unlimited?' They all agreed again.

During the game Darcy was silent, but he played recklessly: whether as the result of this or some other cause, he lost heavily; the parson also lost.

At length, late in the night, Darcy rose to go; the others expressed genuine sorrow at his departure.

'I'm very glad we were at home to-night,' said Captain Gore. 'We are often out, but if you ever come and find me out, you may be sure I'll be at the Imperial in Brigo.'

Darcy, before going, slipped a note into the parson's hand.

'Poor devil,' he said, 'you must not be a loser through me.'

The parson looked at him with muddled eyes and twitching face, but seemed thoroughly at a loss to comprehend what Darcy meant by offering him money; he, however, took it, and put it in his pocket.

Darcy drove off amidst enthusiastic though somewhat indistinct 'good-nights.'

## CHAPTER XII.

## HUNTING.

‘Life is a chase,  
And man the hunter, always following on.’  
L. MORRIS.

SHORTLY after this the hunting-season began, and Darcy's thoughts were turned in a new direction.

The excitement and freedom of the hunting-field were safe outlets for feelings which could not otherwise be so innocently gratified. Whilst it lasted, he was himself again. An almost boyish exuberance of spirits characterised him; his intercourse with his servants was affability itself. He took an immense interest in his horses, and in the various operations of his servants out of doors. Edward Hartley, the game-keeper, was never tired of telling his fellow-servants how the master had asked how Jack, the retriever, was getting on in his training, and whether old Jip, the pointer, would be able to give a few days' sport yet, and whether two hounds he was rearing would be ready to hunt next season.

Tom was in ecstasy, as he rode from hill-top to hill-top, watching the hunt, and waiting with a fresh horse for his master, for Darcy rode hard, ‘He stayed not for brake, he stopped not for stone.’

It was a standing joke with the master of the hunt, Sir Robert Grant, to look around at the meet, and inquire with a chuckle whether ‘Dare-devil Dick’ were there. Upon seeing him, he usually rallied some of the other members on their riding.

‘Come, come, Fitzgerald,’ he would say, ‘you must let us see something to-day! We really must not allow this young sprig to lead the way—it’s a disgrace to us old members! Now, O’Hagan, tighten your girths before starting.’

O’Hagan had sworn to overhaul Darcy on previous occasions, but failing to do so, made the excuse that he had to dismount to tighten a strap, hence the old man’s remark.

Sir Robert was very proud of Darcy, though he joked thus, for he had told someone in confidence that Darcy’s riding reminded him of his own vanished youth.

Of course, through these meetings in the field Darcy became acquainted with the gentlemen of the district, and began to take his proper place in social life. No one ever suspected that he was one who would gladly see all distinctions of rank and even property done away with, and much further from their thoughts was the fact that he was working assiduously for that end, for Darcy rarely brought forward his opinions in public, not because he was afraid or ashamed of them, but because he thought that the time for action was yet a long way off, and that to speak of his opinions and intentions before then would only be putting the enemy on his guard.

This determination did not hinder him from inculcating, or rather insinuating, his opinions whenever he was talking to a man who was dissatisfied with the then existing state of things.

When the hunting was half through, a great stir was made one day by the presence of a strange lady among the members. She was mounted on a superb horse; a

gentleman was by her side, who went up to the master and spoke to him, introducing his sister at the same time. His name was Hubert Clements, hers Rose Clements.

Hubert Clements inherited a landed property of some five or six thousand acres, which he had lately seen for the first time. His life hitherto he had divided between Italy and Paris, and calmed his mind, if indeed it was ever ruffled with regard to his Irish property, by reflecting that he had a very able man as agent there, who transmitted him his rents regularly. He now pretended that he had come to reside on his property for some time, in order to study the interests of his tenants.

The truth was, that he had spent lately too much money on the Continent in one way or other, and it was an imperative necessity that he should retrench. That being the case, what better place could he find than his Irish property? He had a house rent free there; gardens going to waste, the produce of which would bring in a nice yearly income. A few servants would be sufficient to keep up a respectable appearance.

'Yes, Rose,' he said one day in Italy; 'two years there, and we shall again be able to resume our enjoyment; I can't bring myself to face it, though; the dull life there will be the death of me. Oh, confound these money matters!'

'Now that will do,' Miss Rose said firmly. 'I have told you the advantages of going there already, and go we must and shall. To hear you whining over your lost enjoyments, one would think you were a child.'

Miss Rose was master—hence we find them here.

Rose Clements returned the old master's bow with a

gracious smile. The old man's eye lighted up as he looked at her. Heavens! How majestically she sat her horse—with what coolness she endured the gaze of the field; with what a look of hauteur she inspected O'Hagan from cap to spur, as he cavalierly made his horse prance before her; and, when the start was made, instead of rushing blindly to the front, how she kept her horse well in hand, and watched the various riders, who all did their best, for they knew instinctively, as it were, that they were under her eye. They had a long run, and it was surprising to see how few absentees there were at the finish.

Darcy little knew, as he turned his horse's head homeward, with what a look of admiration her eyes followed him.

When a few more meets had taken place, Miss Rose, having acquired in the meantime a thorough knowledge of the country in which they hunted, one day gave the noble animal on which she rode his head; all the medium riders were passed, and she was soon amongst the foremost. By degrees she passed them; one by one, till nothing but Darcy was between her and the front.

Darcy did not know that she was behind, for the hounds were a long way before him, and he was using every endeavour to get nearer to them; then, when the finish came, for the first time, having pulled up, he looked round, and saw her coming, closely followed by two or three gentlemen. She came on, flushed with the ride, and radiant with the bracing air.

'Well-ridden, well-ridden indeed, Mr. Darcy!' she exclaimed. 'I tried hard, but could not get near you.'

'I must really beg your pardon, Miss Clements,' he

said. 'I did not see you till I pulled up my horse, or I would have given you the honour of the first arrival.'

'It would have been no honour unless I had fairly earned it,' she replied.

The others came up, and general congratulations were the order of the day.

Tom was in great glee as he rode home with Darcy. The latter had ridden Firefly the whole of the day, and Tom was loud in his praises of the horse. Next to the horse, Miss Clements came in for his applause.

'You should have seen her, sur,' he exclaimed. 'I could see Misther O'Hagan lash his horse as she passed him, and what d'ye think Lady Brand did?' Here Tom burst into laughter. 'Well, after Miss Clements had passed her, she waited behind, and, as soon as the others had gone round the hill, she turned back, and went home!—Throth, she's a beauty!' Tom continued, half-meditatingly.

Strange to say, Darcy had not thought of her in this light before. He had heard O'Hagan and others rave about her, but then they raved about so many.

But now Tom's emphatic verdict made him pause to think. Yes; he could safely say she was handsome—very handsome, in fact. And then what a carriage she had, how majestic, and what brilliant fire flushed from out those dark eyes! She was Portia, with the heroism left and the weakness all gone. Indeed, he was not sure whether she were not his ideal of womankind. Oh, Tom, Tom, what a commotion your praise of beauty has caused in your master's heart!

## CHAPTER XIII.

£ S. D.

'We are men of ruined blood,  
Therefore comes it we are wise ;  
Fish are we that love the mud,  
Rising to no fancy flies.'

A. TENNYSON.

It must be confessed that Darcy's enthusiasm for the regeneration of his country was not at the usual height during the hunting season. But then Gaunt was such an excellent manager; he got ready all the reports, and read them for Darcy at night. He told him the result of the various meetings, how many new members they had, and how they were all determined to act up to Darcy's idea in possessing courage and patience.

'I'm certain we shall succeed this time!' Gaunt would say. 'The people show such determination, such calm courage. All their fiery, unreasonable nature seems to have gone, and they are now like men, ready to do, and, if need be, to die! It is grand—it is sublime, to see a people like that!'

Such a speech from Gaunt usually aroused Darcy's enthusiasm.

'I'm delighted to hear it, my friend,' he would exclaim. 'That's the point to drive into them. Calmness and courage! Drill them to learn to wait, and all will be well.'

Of course Darcy had to attend a few meetings, at which he propounded his views, and there was the usual amount of enthusiasm and cheering at all such assemblies.

The hunting season being over, Darcy's thoughts were turned more in the direction of the wrongs of his country. He went out oftener with Gaunt to midnight meetings through the frost and snow.

Gaunt had drawn out schemes for the purchase of arms and ammunition, and for the safe storage of the same in various parts of the district.

Shortly afterwards an order came down from headquarters, through Gaunt to Darcy, that all the lodges in the district were to contribute to the general fund for the above purpose.

Gaunt met the heads of the various lodges, and by well-chosen and persuasive words, he raised such a picture in their minds of the power which a levy of a shilling per month on every member would give to the society, that they were filled with excitement and enthusiasm.

'It is computed, my fellow-countrymen,' he said, 'that there are at least three hundred thousand members in our great and glorious society. Just think of that! Does it not make you feel as if your country were yet in existence, that it yet throbbed with life, though cowards tell us that it has seen its day? They tell us that now it should crouch low in subjection under the heel of the tyrant! Shame on all such, and eternal reproach!

'Three hundred thousand shillings, my fellow-countrymen, is fifteen thousand pounds, and twelve times that is one hundred and eighty thousand pounds! Then, if that goes on for two years, we shall have three hundred and sixty thousand pounds. Just think of that, my friends; and all raised by one shilling a month—three-

pence a week! Just what would buy a glass of whisky! So, you see, fellow-countrymen, that if each of our members takes one glass of whisky less each week, and gives the money for the redemption of his country, the safety of Ireland is assured, and each man has a future before him, a great and glorious future, which he can never even hope for under the present degrading tyranny. And I say this, my fellow-countrymen, that whoever cannot do such a small thing as that for the cause, is not worthy to be a member of our glorious society, or to be intrusted with its valuable secrets.'

To this they all assented with vigorous lungs. Filled with his views, the heads of the lodges went their various ways, and, in even more glowing language, laid the scheme before their several members. These latter were filled with astonishment at such immense results coming from such small beginnings, and responded liberally. At all the meetings the great success of the undertaking was talked of. Ireland was to be delivered in a short time, and for ever!

Darcy, as well as the rest, exulted over the thought. He himself had contributed liberally to the fund, and had forwarded it through Gaunt.

Father John alone was despondent, for his dues were beginning to fall short. He asked Gaunt to come and see him one night. Gaunt went, as he had often done before, expecting an evening that he liked, with pipes and whisky and a roaring fire. But when he went, Father John was in a very gloomy mood. There was the roaring fire, there was the arm-chair by it, where Gaunt so often sat; but where—oh! where was the whisky?

'I say, old boy,' said Gaunt, after both had been silent for some time, 'haven't you got a drop of some sort?—or are you turned teetotal?'

Father John did not reply. There was silence again.

'Hang it all, Gaunt!' he at length exclaimed, 'I'm not going to put up with this sort of thing. Patriotism is all very fine, but damn it, a man mustn't starve! How much do you think I got last Sunday? We had three collections, and how much do you think I got?'

Gaunt shook his head.

'Five shillings! Five shillings to support a man for a month!'

'But you've had christenings and other things,' put in Gaunt.

'Ay,' said Father John, in sarcastic tones; 'two christenings—that's ten shillings; and two beggarly weddings, a pound, and no funeral. I never have a funeral,' he continued. 'The fools! whenever anybody is sick, they must send for that ass, Father Matthew; as if I couldn't do it as well! I'll tell you what it is, Gaunt, I've serious notions of asking the bishop's permission to denounce these secret societies from the altar. They're the curse of the land, leading people from their religious devotions and turning them against their natural leaders!'

'See here, Father John,' said Gaunt, leaning towards him and speaking slowly, 'priest and all as you are, if you go on with any more of that damned nonsense, you may find yourself in Cave No. 3 some night, and you know where that is. How much do you generally get at your monthly collections?'

'Thirty pounds,' Father John replied. 'Not a farthing less than thirty pounds.'

'Well, listen to me,' Gaunt went on; 'you're a man of great intelligence and discrimination, Father John. Your talents are far above those of most parish priests, and it's a pity that you should make a fool of yourself. You need not starve. Do you think I would let an old friend like you starve? Not likely! You shall have your thirty pounds from me every month, and save yourself all trouble about crying from the altar, and getting yourself into a hole. But I'll expect some help from you. You'll often be able to give me information on various little matters, for they'll tell you more at that square box in the chapel in a week than I could get out of them in a year.'

Father John was flattered, and finally promised to give Gaunt any information that he considered not very confidential.

'You know, Gaunt, that we must hold the confessional sacred,' Father John said, apologetically.

'Oh, of course,' Gaunt replied. 'I would not hurt your feelings on any account.'

Then the whisky was produced, and they made themselves what they considered comfortable.

When Gaunt returned from Father John's late that night, having gained his rooms, he took his writing-desk, lit his pipe, and placed a flask which he took from his pocket by his side, and then began to write. He commented as he went on on what he wrote. It was a list of the lodges, and their contributions to the fund for the past month. This was the list:

LODGE.				£	s.	d.
No. 1	...	...	...	10	8	6
" 2	...	...	...	9	8	9
" 3	...	...	...	7	14	6
" 4	...	...	...	12	13	6
" 5	...	...	...	10	5	3
" 6	...	...	...	11	4	6
" 7	...	...	...	6	9	9
" 8	...	...	...	11	13	6
" 9	...	...	...	14	12	3
" 10	...	...	...	15	13	6
" 11	...	...	...	9	14	9
" 12	...	...	...	8	7	6
" 13	...	...	...	14	10	6
" 14	...	...	...	15	1	6
" 15	...	...	...	8	7	9
" 16	...	...	...	16	3	6
" 17	...	...	...	11	7	6
" 18	...	...	...	13	2	6
" 19	...	...	...	9	10	6
" 20	...	...	...	14	5	6
Total				£231	10	6
Mr. Darcy				100	0	0
Grand Total				£331	10	6

He viewed the total with great complacency. 'Not bad,' he said. 'Curse those lodge masters! I wonder how much of this they have kept back? I suppose those sharks in Dublin must have their share. Let me see how much I shall send them. Two hundred pounds? But it won't do to give them a bad habit. Next time won't be as large. Let me see—one hundred and fifty pounds? Quite enough too! One hundred and fifty pounds, then, it is. That leaves me one hundred and eighty-one pounds, ten shillings and sixpence for myself. Then there's that fool, Father John—thirty pounds for him. That leaves one hundred and fifty-one pounds, ten shillings and sixpence for my services. Then, I suppose, I must spend the odd fifty-one pounds, ten shillings and sixpence in revolvers and ammunition.

Only trusty men to have them, the rest to be armed out of the store when the time comes.'

Here he enjoyed a quiet laugh, burnt the paper he had made his calculation on, and went to bed.

Father John was well satisfied with the arrangements that Gaunt had made with him. His monthly collections had not fallen off to anything like the amount he had mentioned. In fact, a few pounds was the extent of his loss.

Father John had correspondents in various parts of America, and soon after he became acquainted with Gaunt, he had written to several places, giving a description of him, and asking for information about him, but no answer had as yet come to his inquiries. He had found out from Gaunt himself what part of America he had come from, and, from remarks he had made over his whisky, Father John concluded that he had been in Ireland before. Thus far his acuteness had found the trail of Gaunt's life here and there.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### DOUBTS.

'How sweet when on the parchèd soul,  
Burnt dry with passion's fires,  
The balm of friendship healing comes,  
To soothe its mad desires.'

ANON.

DARCY had worked hard for the cause during the winter months—neither his purse nor his time was spared. Occasionally he despaired of being able to mould his log-headed countrymen into the heroes of his imagina-

tion ; but when, again, he heard their cheers and vows of vengeance as he spoke to them at their meetings, his hopes revived, and he was satisfied that there was something in them which it was worth his while to endeavour to raise and call forth.

No suspicion of Darcy's disloyalty had as yet crossed the minds of either the authorities or his various acquaintances in the country. It was known that he held rather advanced views, but nothing more dangerous was apprehended from him. The police in the village had not the slightest suspicion of him. He went to church with as much regularity as could be expected ; he returned with a genial smile the curtsies and other marks of respect which he invariably met with on his way there. He listened attentively when in church to discourses on the length and breadth of the Temple, the Levitical Law, the Babylonish captivity, and similar subjects with which the minister regaled his audience, as if there were no such things as drink, lust, and grovelling cares among them. Surely a man who did all these things could not be a traitor !

Gaunt rarely went with Darcy to church. He preferred, he said, to worship in his own way, not specifying what it was.

Someone suggested early in the year, to those in authority, that it would be a stroke of policy to make Darcy a magistrate. His uncle had been one, and the people, who honoured Darcy very much, would receive it with great favour. At first, Darcy was very much averse to accepting the dignity, but Gaunt kept constantly reminding him what a grand thing it would be for the cause, how it would disarm all suspicion, and

give him opportunities of finding out many things about the enemy. Persuaded by these considerations, he accepted the honour.

He made an excellent magistrate. His knowledge of the peculiarities of the people was of great service to him in the execution of his duties. He would be thoroughly impartial if he could, but often, when he sat on the bench, with Gaunt by his side as a listener, he would see the shrewd eyes of a prisoner fixed eagerly on him. Upon looking at the man again, a sign would be made by which the prisoner meant that he claimed the right of brotherhood. Darcy often on such occasions felt inclined for the moment to curse the insolence of the man who dared to think that he could be made partial by such means. But a second reflection usually brought him to his senses. The man was a brother in distress, so he argued, brought into that distress by the force of laws which he did not recognise. He had sworn to assist a brother under all circumstances. On the other hand, he had sworn to administer the laws of the country with impartiality. He generally made a compromise. He fined the prisoner, and rated him soundly for the fault, but afterwards sent him privately the amount he had to pay.

Darcy sometimes spoke to Gaunt about this dilemma in which he found himself, but Gaunt usually made very light of the matter.

‘You certainly swore to administer the laws of the country impartially,’ he would say with a laugh, ‘but are they the laws of the country? That’s the point. I maintain that the laws of the country are those made by the people of the country, and these

laws are not. They are made by the enemies of the country.'

Sometimes Darcy seemed satisfied with the explanation; at other times, when he had to condone a crime of more than usual proportions, he pressed the matter further. Gaunt then flew to other arguments.

'Supposing,' he would say, 'Mr. Darcy, for the sake of argument, that both your oaths are of equal value, standing by themselves, yet you must acknowledge that the one you took first ought to have the chief claim on you.'

At other times, Gaunt made no attempt to convince him, beyond exclaiming, with apparent indignation, that he could not understand such hair-splitting scruples.

On such occasions Darcy could not calm down before he had had a wild ride into the night, or, what had been of late a more frequent remedy with him, until he had visited Captain Gore, either at his house or at the Imperial, and spent the greater part of the night drinking and playing and losing doggedly.

His relations with his servants at home had not been lately of that free and pleasurable character which they had been during the hunting season. As a consequence the servants were gloomy, and did their work without any enthusiasm.

Although he used his horses frequently, Tom readily saw that he took no pleasure in the animals themselves. They were merely means of conveyance from one place to another, not the companions which they had been—not endued with that personality which they were formerly supposed to possess.

'They might be post-horses,' said Tom bitterly, one day, 'for all the intherest he takes in dhim!'

Darcy was suddenly startled one day in the early spring, as he sat in his library trying to read, by the servant informing him that Tom wished to speak to him.

'Tell him to come in,' he said.

Tom came in. His hat was crushed in one hand; in the other he held a letter. His lips were pressed tightly together.

'Well, Tom, what is it?' Darcy asked, in a wearied tone.

Tom said nothing, but gave him the letter. Darcy read it. It was a formal notice to leave his service.

'What do you mean by this?' he asked, in an angry voice.

Tom did not answer.

'Haven't you wages sufficient? or haven't you food enough? or have you too much work to do?' he continued. 'I suppose you have got a better place?' he added bitterly.

'No, I haven't got a better place,' Tom added, just as bitterly. 'Nor any place at all. And me wages is good, and me food sufficient, and I've got a damn'd sight too aisy work!'

'Well, what the devil is the matter with you then?' roared Darcy.

'There's nothin' the matther with *me*,' Tom replied; 'but *you're* goin' to the divil!'

Darcy was utterly taken aback. He sat down and said nothing.

'Your uncle,' Tom went on, 'often and often said to

me, "Tom, whin I'm gone, you musht look afther him. He has got the wild blood av the Darcy's in him, and he'll ather go to heaven or hell straight away." And now what are ye comin' to? A magisthrate! Dhrinkin' and gamblin' with Captain Gore and his dhrunken lot! I'm not goin' to live on you any longer!' And Tom turned to go.

He had not got to the door when Darcy rushed after him, caught him by the arm, and pulled him back into the room.

'Sit down, you fool!' he said. 'My uncle told you that, and yet you want to go and leave me! You're a nice protector! Tom,' he continued earnestly, 'why don't you tell me when I am going to the devil? You will tell me in the future, won't you?'

'How can I know?' Tom replied. 'You go away by yerself, or with that fellow Gaunt. You haven't taken me with you these three months. Three months next Thursday it will be since I dhrove you lasht.'

'Well, Tom, you'll not have the complaint to make again,' Darcy said.

Then a sudden thought struck him.

'Tom,' he said, in a low voice, 'your master is engaged in a business which you must join if you want to be with him. The redemption of our country, Tom, from the yoke of tyranny. It's a grand undertaking!'

'Oh, all right,' Tom replied. 'I don't mind the glory av it. I suppose it's all right, as you're in it. What am I to do?'

'We shall have a meeting in a night or two, and you shall come with me and be made a member.'

'That'll do ! that'll do !' said Tom, in great glee. 'It's a glorious day, sur,' he continued, as he looked out of the window. 'Let me give you a dhrive round be Lock Goyle and home be Burnrea.'

'Very well, Tom,' Darcy assented. 'Where you like.'

Tom went out whistling merrily.

Darcy told Gaunt that they had gained a new member in Tom. The latter did not like this information at all. Nevertheless, he concealed his dislike, but determined in his own mind that he would make Tom repent. About a week afterward Tom might be seen limping about in consequence of the severe treatment he had experienced on the occasion of his joining the brotherhood.

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## CHAPTER XV.

ROSE CLEMENTS.

'O ye naked rooms,  
Void, desolate, without a charm !  
Will love's smile chase your lonely glooms,  
And drape your walls, and make them warm ?'  
A. SMITH.

IN about a week after the above occurrence, Darcy was agreeably surprised to receive an invitation, written in a bold hand, requesting the pleasure of his company at Emerald House. It was from Mr. and Miss Clements.

'Her hand !' Darcy exclaimed, when he had read it. He looked at the simple, commonplace words again.

There was something in the writing which captivated him. Every stroke was a declaration of independence.

Miss Clements had not been idle since she had come to Ireland. It was essential to her existence that she should do something. She had come fresh from the Continent to comparative hardships, and the contrast was shocking to her. The hunting season had given her occupation for a few months; when that was over, she often wished that Hubert would express a wish to return to the Continent. This he, however, did not do, thinking that her mind was fully made up to remain in Ireland for two years. She dared not suggest it herself. That would be a sign of weakness which Hubert would not be slow to take advantage of.

Her discontent deepened into contempt of the gentry around her. 'What a sorry lot they are, Hubert!' she said one day bitterly. 'They remind one of the barons of old, each shut up in his castle for the winter, swilling his own drink, regardless of the rest of the world.'

In sheer despair, she began to visit the humble homes about her. She had a heart somewhere, and it was often touched in secret by the squalor she met with. Often, of course, she was taken advantage of by those who saw the weak point in her character.

Micky Flynn's cabin was guilty of being too perfectly ventilated. It had the quality which none but astronomers could properly value — of showing the stars through the roof. Rose Clements visited it one day, and, in answer to her inquiries as to how it was that they had so far neglected it, she got whining complaints about the 'rint.'

'Arrah, dhin, lady dear,' Micky's wife said, 'may the blessid mother av God power down blessin's on ye! Throth, divil a copper had we to spare whin the rint was paid lasht month!'

The falsehood succeeded, for on that very day Miss Rose gave orders that the house should be repaired at once at her own expense. She also lowered the rent there and then.

Micky Flynn had been away at a fair that same day, selling three heifers, the payment for which he added to his account at the Bank of Ireland, a branch of which was convenient for him. Having done that, he spent the remainder of the day with his friends in a tent on the fair-green.

Great was his joy when he got home and heard of the stroke of business which his wife had done, and in honour of the event he sent out little Shawn, his eldest child, for a pint of whisky, with which they all made merry.

Such incidents, and others of a genuine character, so worked on the mind of Miss Rose, that at length she eagerly devoured the inflammatory articles in the most inflammatory of Irish papers. She became an enthusiast. 'Slavery,' she said, 'was not a word strong enough to express the condition of the Irish peasant.'

Her brother looked on with apprehension at this new vagary of hers, as he thought it. He was generally too indolent to speak decisively to her, but once he did muster up courage.

'Rose,' he said, as he paced round the room, while she sat before the fire, 'you have gone mad, I think. You forced me to come to this detestable place in order to

retrench. Retrench indeed! We shall be beggars soon if you go on at this rate. Cutting down rents! building cottages, and I don't know how many other nonsensical things have got into your head! Hang it all! if a fellow's affairs must go to the dogs, he may as well enjoy himself while his credit lasts. And I mean to do it, too, if you go on in this absurd way! I'll give you a week to think over it, and if you still intend to ruin me, I'll be off to the tables and have another throw.'

She sat looking into the fire with an amused smile.

'Oh, you needn't wait a week,' she said, when he had finished. 'Go by all means! go at once! I have my own money, and can live quite well without you.' Then she turned, and looking him full in the face, said, with a sarcastic laugh, 'But what a fool you'll be without me!'

He knew that she was right.

'You needn't be so severe with me, Rose,' he said, apologetically. 'You know it's very hard for a fellow here—no company, no one to talk to.'

'I know it,' she said.

Then both were silent.

'Suppose,' she said at length, 'suppose we try to rouse up these boors? Let us give a party, or something of that sort.'

He was inwardly delighted at the prospect, but restrained his joy, lest she should draw back on seeing him so well satisfied.

'Just as you like, Rose,' he answered. 'Do you think they would come?'

'Of course they would,' she replied. 'I know of one

or two fools, at any rate, who wouldn't refuse.' And she thought of O'Hagan and a few others of his stamp.

Thus it came about that Darcy received his invitation.

The night was beautifully fine as Tom drove him to Emerald House. Tom was in high spirits.

'I suppose all the gintry av the counthry will be there to-night, sur?' Tom asked inquiringly.

'I really don't know, Tom,' Darcy replied. 'I know of no one going but myself.'

'Oh, they're sure to be there, sur,' Tom went on. 'The masher of the hunt, and Mither O'Hagan, Lady Brand, and the whole lot av dhim!'

Darcy was amused at Tom's excitement.

'We shall soon be there, Tom,' he said, with a smile, 'when you can see for yourself.'

Tom was right, for as they approached the house, they had to take their place in a long line of vehicles, which one by one, deposited their burdens at the door. As Darcy alighted, he could see O'Hagan inside, pulling out his whiskers and twirling his moustache as he took a glance at himself in the hall mirror.

Darcy was not long in finding his way to the reception-room. He tarried for a moment on the threshold, and took a view of the scene before him. One group fixed his attention. Miss Clements stood surrounded by admirers, all eager to get some token of her interest in them. As Darcy approached, she stepped out of the circle to welcome him. His vanity was touched, for in the background he could see the astonished and disappointed looks of the deserted ones. He accordingly exerted himself more than his wont to

entertain and interest her, and he could make himself very captivating when he chose.

‘We shall finish our talk another time,’ she said graciously, as other visitors were announced.

The human flies buzzed round Miss Clements whenever she was at liberty. She bore with them patiently, occasionally brushing one away with a slightly acid remark. O’Hagan especially was annoying. Had he confined his remarks to anything that concerned herself, womanlike, she might have tolerated him ; but when he went into rhapsodies about other matters, and expected her to listen to him—well, it was too absurd !

He commenced some wonderful tale about himself and his horse. Several around had heard it scores of times, and now they tried to stop him by talking about something else ; but as they did so, he raised his voice above theirs, till at last they had to give way and listen impatiently.

Miss Clements listened too, with an amused smile. She had heard it before on the hunting-field. When he had finished, and his solitary laugh alone responded to the point of the story, she joined in with : ‘In fact, in the words of the poet, Mr. O’Hagan, you might say :

“This is my story, sir—a trifle, indeed ; I assure you,  
Much more perchance might be said, but I hold him of all  
men most lightly  
Who swerves from the truth in his tale.”

‘Quite so ! quite so !’ O’Hagan was saying with satisfaction, when the others, seeing the edge of the sally, burst into such a roar of laughter that for once in his

life he was discomfited, and—well, he told no more tales that evening.

Miss Rose was well pleased with the success of her party. As she moved amongst her guests, she found the majority chatting and enjoying each other's company. Of course, there were a few punctilious people, who, for some cause of which she knew nothing, shunned some other equally punctilious people; but then, although they shunned each other, they talked to someone else, so that they gave her little trouble.

When the musical part of the evening began, there was the lady present, well known in all drawing-rooms, who has a cold, so that she cannot sing; or who has not practised for dear knows how long, so that she dare not venture to play; yet who, with some pressing, tries, and does fairly well. Others, too, of average ability, did their best to make that ability appear greater, and to entertain the listeners at the same time.

Seeing everything going on so well, Miss Clements took a rapid glance round the room. Darcy was standing speaking to an old gentleman near a small ornamental table. She went in the direction of the table, as if to get something off it. Of course, Darcy, seeing her, abandoned the old gentleman and offered his service.

'Oh, thank you,' she said, 'it does not matter at all, Mr. Darcy. It was only my scent-bottle.'

After a few seconds well-feigned seeking, she found it in her pocket.

'How stupid of me!' she said. 'I might have looked there at first. I have been so busy all day,' she continued, 'that I felt rather tired, and the heat of the room is oppressive.'

‘Should you like to go into the fresh air?’ he asked.

‘Oh, thank you, Mr. Darcy, I must not leave the room,’ she replied. Then, after a pause, ‘That glass door at the far end of the room opens into a greenhouse; there is no fire there at present. I think it would be cooler.’

‘Will you take my arm then, Miss Clements?’

She took his arm, and they walked together to the end of the room. He opened the glass-door.

‘This is really refreshing, Mr. Darcy,’ she said. ‘I am very thankful to you for bringing me here.’

‘I am only too happy to be of use to Miss Clements,’ he replied.

‘Compliments! compliments everywhere!’ she said. ‘Do let us be natural for five minutes.’

‘You began,’ he replied, with a smile.

‘Ah! then I suppose we must both be natural,’ she said. ‘We shall be back among the primness soon enough. What have you been doing since the hunting season, Mr. Darcy?’ she asked abruptly.

‘A question easier asked than answered,’ he replied. ‘I have been doing so many things. Looking after my estate takes up a great deal of my time, and then, of course, you heard that I have been made a magistrate, and that I have been amusing myself sending a lot of wretches to gaol.’

‘I’ll not believe the latter part of what you say, Mr. Darcy,’ she said, warmly; ‘for when I have visited the cottages, your name has never been mentioned but with blessings.’

‘A very little goodness goes for much,’ he replied. ‘But I never heard of you visiting the cottages, as you call them. I suppose you mean cabins.’

## CHAPTER XVI.

## MESHES.

'He that roars for liberty  
Faster binds a tyrant's power !'

A. TENNYSON.

Now that Tom was a member of the brotherhood, he accompanied Darcy to the meetings on almost every occasion. Gaunt was often absent from the meetings which Darcy attended ; for he thought his authority would be lessened if he only played an inferior part to Darcy before the eyes of such an impressionable audience.

Tom was sorely puzzled by the doctrine which Darcy preached, and which he heard cheered from time to time. He could not bring himself to believe that it was right, yet he could not find the weak points in the argument. As his friends said, it was as clear as daylight that all men were born equal, and that it was only tyranny and oppression that made one man have thousands of acres, while another had not a sod. Tom listened, but could make nothing of it. He, however, wished that the time might be a long way off, when his master would divide his estate, and live like everyone else—when there would be no more masters, no horses, and no hunting.

Gaunt's faculty for organisation was great. He had, by this time, got all the lodges in his district into perfect working order.

Many books have been written on the tyranny of various rulers, sects, and parties, but one has yet to be written on the tyranny of secretaries. Wielding in

many cases an enormous power, with very little chance of being called to a wrong account for it, they have many inducements to lord it over the unfortunate beings who happen to be in their power.

Gaunt was no exception to the rule—he wished to deliver the people, forsooth! from the tyranny of the English! from the intruder! the tyrant! the trampler on the liberties of Ireland! and so on—while far more galling, a thousand times more degrading, was his own hateful rule. Oh, many a cry went up to heaven for deliverance from it!

He had a set of men in his service of the lazy class which can generally be found to work for drink. It was the office of these men to draw others into the net. Gaunt wanted, especially, to get as many farmers as he could—of labourers he had plenty, but he wanted the farmers—they could pay more. There were stock arguments, or, rather, inducements, dinned into their ears. They could not be caught with the bait which those who had everything to win, and nothing to lose, took. They were, however, reminded that times of great disturbance were at hand, when the whole land would be in confusion, and when the soldiers would have to be met. Whoever had not joined the brotherhood before that time came would have two enemies instead of one. The soldiers would make no distinctions. How were they to know who belonged to the society, and who did not? And the members of the brotherhood would not, when that time came, assist the waverers, but would rather take vengeance upon them for their cowardice. This was the argument of fear. It gained a good many.

The farmer's sons were reminded, that, if they belonged

to the society, wherever they went they would never want for a meal, as there were brethren in all parts of the world to whom they could make themselves known, and who were bound by oath to help them. This also brought in a number of new members.

A great many were also caught by drink—when in that muddled state indicating the first stage of intoxication, in which the veriest coward strives to put on the hero, and the waverer, for mere bravado, becomes decided, a taunt or a threat was generally sufficient to screw their courage to the sticking-point.

Once in the meshes, the victim was secure. Did he become troublesome, and not pay his dues properly, a thrashing on a dark night was generally sufficient to bring him to his senses; and, if he was still refractory, other means could be found.

It was only by severing the ties which bound a man to his native place, and by crossing the seas, that he who had once joined could shake himself free. A great many left the country for this reason; and were classed by public report amongst those driven out by tyrannical landlords.

Darcy, of course, knew little of these things; he had not to dip into details, for Gaunt relieved him from that. High above such paltry affairs, in the sky-land of theory he held on his course, and breathed the ethereal air. Sometimes, however, he got down into the choking fogs. At a meeting, oftentimes, the grandest bursts of eloquence fell flat on the ears of his audience. This made him despair. He little knew what allowance he ought to have made for them!

## CHAPTER XVII.

## SENTIMENT.

‘And so I swear a cold fidelity!’

P. B. SHELLEY.

A FEW weeks after the party at Emerald House, Darcy was taking a cross-country gallop in the evening to brace himself up for what he expected would be a meeting of the above character. He had turned his horse's head in the direction of the Clements' house, not that he intended to visit there, but the consciousness that he had been near her, that he had looked on the sights so familiar to her, he felt would do him good. And then the secrecy, the romance of the thing was increased by her ignorance of his nearness. How he would surprise her some day, when the years had rolled by and when all this turmoil would be over, by telling her how thoroughly she had filled his mind in the past! how he hovered round her like a guardian angel!

In the midst of his reverie, his horse shied, and it was with difficulty that he kept his seat. He was passing over ground that he knew well, where a few trees encircled a mound. As soon as he recovered himself, he looked around to see what had frightened the horse. The moon was shining brightly, but fitfully, through breaks in the clouds. When he looked through the trees, towards the mound, he saw something white on the top of it.

He had heard the popular stories about such places. That the bones of heroes lay underneath them, that the

man never prospered who removed them, and that they were the favourite resort of the fairies and the banshees. Nevertheless, he determined to see what the white object was.

He tied his horse to a tree, and climbed the mound as silently as he could. As he neared the top, he could make out a human figure. He went higher : then he heard a voice ; a little higher yet, and he could distinguish the words it spoke. They were uttered with a fervour and passion in strange contrast with the gentle murmur of the wind through the tree-tops.

‘Land of my sires ! what mortal hand,  
Can tear me from thy rugged strand ?’

it said. He had heard those tones before. Where ? He remembered : it was when Miss Clements had spoken to him of the wrongs of their country, and of the glorious future in store for it. Yes, it was her voice ! How noble it sounded ! With an impulse he could not control, he quickly reached the top, and stood before her. The moon shone upon his face, and showed her who he was.

‘Forgive me, Miss Clements,’ he said, ‘for daring to break in on your sacred moments. I heard your voice, and could not hinder myself from joining you. Your influence over me has been greater than I can express, and my highest ambition is to win your esteem, and eventually your love, so that we both, joined in purpose, may live and help each other for that glorious end, the redemption of our country !’

He ceased, and looked at her as she stood in silence, the contour of her face, the bold firm lines, being touched by the moonlight. With a form traced after the rich

fulness of the south, she stood, fit subject for an artist's pencil or a young man's dream.

'Mr. Darcy,' she said at length, 'our country demands our aid, our time, and all the powers we have. Why think of the selfish idea of marriage at such a time? Leave that to those who have no higher object in life! We, who have such a grand object in view, can afford to wait, satisfied with each other's friendship, till the end be gained, and then——'

'Then, Miss Clements,' he broke in abruptly, 'may I hope you will be my wife?'

'You may,' she replied.

He took her hand and imprinted a kiss upon her forehead. Then he went on to tell her of the responsible position he occupied in the district, and how the organisation was spreading and becoming more perfected. How multitudes were being enrolled in the brotherhood, he told her. Then he went on to speak of how he was going to address a meeting that night, and how the remembrance of her words would add new vigour to his tongue and give new life to his thoughts.

Talking thus reminded him that it was time to go. He wished to see her to her house, which was a few hundred yards off, but she would not hear of it.

'Go,' she said, 'to those brave men who wait for you, and tell them of the glorious dead who sleep underneath this mound. Tell them they died for their country!'

'Your wishes shall be fulfilled to the letter,' he said, as he kissed her on the mouth.

As he was going, he stopped suddenly.

'Where shall I see you again, Miss Clements?' he asked. 'Here?'

'Oh no, not here,' she replied. 'You know our house.'

'But your brother——' he was saying.

'He knows me,' she said, interrupting him, 'and will not interfere,'

'Good-night then, love,' he said.

'Good-night,' she replied.

His horse was safe, and he sprang into the saddle and galloped off, looking back occasionally to catch another glimpse of the white form on the height.

There was no lack of enthusiasm at the meeting that night, for Darcy's burning words soon thawed the reserve of his hearers, and caused the deep waters of their passion to boil intensely.

Even Tom had not a word that night to say for his own opinions. He was completely won over to Darcy's view.

'Och, sur!' he exclaimed, as he walked home with Darcy, 'it's a mighty pity but you war made a priesht! Divil a betther discoorse I ever heard in me life.'

'Ah! Tom, Tom!' Darcy said, 'it's easy for a man to talk finely when he has had such luck as I have had. I got the love of the best woman in the country to-night. Would you like to know who she is, Tom?'

'Arrah, dhin, wouldn't I!' Tom replied.

'Miss Clements, Tom! You know her.'

'Arrah, dhin, don't I! Och! good luck to her! the beauty! Throth! yer a lucky man, sur!'

'You may say that, Tom!'

'Faix, it's betther to be born to good luck, than to a good father, sur!'

'Both would be best, I should say, Tom.'

'Throth, dhin you've got both, sur, an' yer lucky out-an'-out!'

With this sort of conversation they cheered the way home that night. Darcy impressed on Tom the fact that the matter must be kept secret for the present.

‘That’s a good thing, any how!’ Tom said to himself, when he got home. ‘She’ll keep him straight, I’ll warrant! No more goin’ to Captain Gore’s, after this. Och, dhin, but I’m glad! That ould wretch, Gaunt, will have to pack up an’ be off, afore long!’

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ON THE SCENT.

‘He who throws the dice of destiny,  
Must bide the issue.’

A. SMITH.

DARCY’S plan for carrying out the object of the society in the district over which he presided was a good one. Secrecy was the keynote of it. All preparations were to be made as quietly as possible, and not till everything was in readiness was a word to be said in public. He carried out his idea faithfully himself, for he never attended a meeting without taking all possible precautions lest his presence there should be detected.

But, as anyone could see, this essential particular of secrecy could not be maintained. It was to Gaunt’s advantage to keep the society in existence as long as he could, and for that reason he exerted himself in the same direction as Darcy. Father John had also a like reason for secrecy.

But who could keep that mass of ignorant and superstitious men from boasting about the future? What was to hinder them from having their revenge on a master whom they disliked, by telling him that they would be as well off as himself in a short time? In their drinking bouts, at fairs, and markets, 'the wine being in, and the wit out,' they made no secret of their hopes.

They had the feeling that a great deal of power was in their hands, and who that has that feeling does not wish to let others know of it, in some way or other?

When Tom saw in what his master was engaged, he endeavoured to keep the police from having any suspicion of it. Many a 'thrate' he gave the various members of the Royal Irish, merely to tell them some cock-and-bull story about Gaunt.

His hatred of Gaunt was genuine, and his denunciation of him as one who lived on his master, and who was ungrateful, and a humbug, and so on, seemed quite natural, and they believed him. If one of them happened to mention that he had seen Darcy out at night, Tom had Captain Gore's to point to, and afterwards, with a knowing wink, the Clements' house.

But higher authorities than the local ones began to have a suspicion that a plot was on foot in the county. A detective was sent down by them from the Castle, to find out anything that he could. He lodged in the village for some months, pretending that he had come there to fish. He was not long there before he had gained the goodwill of the inhabitants, for he was ever ready to join in their dances, and other amusements; his

money, too, flowed freely, and that fact was the best introduction into popular favour.

No position that a man could attain was to him a guarantee that that man could not, or would not, commit an unlawful act. He looked upon all with equal suspicion, and took for granted that all were bad, and that it was only necessary for him to find out their errors or crimes.

He was not long in discovering that there was a conspiracy—that could be found out in any drunken brawl. Gaunt at once became an object of his suspicion; he watched him narrowly, and in a short time felt convinced that his suspicions were well founded. But then he looked upon Gaunt as a man of secondary consequence; he wanted the prime mover, and who could that be but the man who sheltered Gaunt? Darcy was the man undoubtedly, he thought, and against Darcy he wished to find tangible evidence. In this the detective, sharp as he was, miscalculated, for had he taken Gaunt, the whole movement in that district would at once have been brought to a stand.

The detective could not have come at a worse time for his purpose, in so far as Darcy was concerned, for the attention of the latter was now given to other matters. Love, or what he considered to be such, beckoned him to follow, and he, like a mesmerised subject, followed whithersoever it led.

The detective had watched him go out in the evenings, and had cautiously followed him, but with one uniform result, the journey always ended at Emerald House. He got tired of such fruitless watching, and turned his attention to finding out where the meetings of the

society were held, trusting to chance to give him some information about Darcy.

A few weeks later a meeting of magistrates was called privately, for there had recently been some agrarian outrages in the county, to consider what means they should take for the suppression of such crimes.

Darcy was not present, much to the surprise of some of his brother magistrates, for they all had had an urgent call to attend the meeting.

The detective was there, and he gave such an account of the conspiracy that had spread itself over the district, as made the worthy administrators of the law shudder. It was like living over a mine, or sporting one's self on the edge of a volcano. They heard with astonishment that Darcy was suspected. There was no positive proof against him, the detective said, but he had reason to think that Darcy was connected with the society.

The day after the above meeting Darcy received an anonymous letter warning him that he was in peril, and that he was watched. 'They have no positive proof against you at present,' the letter went on, 'and if you care to take a friend's advice, you would leave the country for some time in order to disarm suspicion, and to let the matter blow over. If you have any connection with the conspiracy, be assured that it will be to your advantage to sever it.'

## CHAPTER XIX.

## PARTING.

'Will you repent that you loosened your arms,  
To let me fall so deep, and so far out of sight?'  
A. MENKIN.

DARCY felt inclined to disregard the advice contained in the above letter, for he happened to be then in a defiant and cynical frame of mind. Tom had felt himself greatly honoured by being made the recipient of Darcy's secret about his lady-love, and his honest heart was cheered by seeing the genial spirits of his master shine forth on all about the house.

This did not last long. With regret Tom noticed, as the weeks wore on, that the evil spirit was again taking possession, for Darcy went about the house with a lowering brow and with bitter words on his tongue. Several times also, after his return from Emerald House, he had drunk so freely that Tom had to help the other servants to put him to bed. It was on one of these occasions that he snatched the painting which he had brought from Dublin off the wall, and in a hoarse voice ordered it to be taken to the lumber-room. On one occasion, also, he had come to the stables, and ordered Tom to get ready and take him a drive.

'All right, sur,' Tom said. When he had harnessed the horse to the vehicle and both had seated themselves, 'Where must I drive to?' said Tom.

'To Captain Gore's,' Darcy replied, in a half-defiant tone.

Tom was too much astonished to move for a few

moments, for Darcy had not gone there for several weeks. At length he threw the whip out of his hand and jumped down. 'I'll be damned if I do !' he exclaimed.

Darcy did not say a word, but took the reins and shook them over the willing horse, which darted off in a gallop.

He turned the horse's head in the direction of Captain Gore's house ; as he went along he gradually slackened speed, till the horse had fallen into a slow trot, then into a walk ; finally he pulled up. For a moment he looked about irresolutely, then turned the horse round and went back the way he came.

'Take that cursed horse out,' he roared to a stable-boy when he got home. The stable-boy trembled, and hastened to do as he was bid.

After a few days' consideration, Darcy began to think better of the advice of his anonymous friend.

'I suppose I must bid her good-bye,' he said to himself. He accordingly visited Emerald House. He only stayed a short time.

'I suppose you must go,' she said, with a sigh, after he had explained to her why he had to go. Somehow she looked pitiable—her dignity had vanished.

'Well, you see yourself,' he said, somewhat petulantly, 'that I have got into a fix, and that I must get out of it—and this seems the easiest way.'

'Oh, yes—yes!' she said. 'Of course you know best, but it does seem so short a time since we have known each other.'

'It's seven or eight weeks,' he said, 'and we have seen enough of each other in that time, goodness knows!'

‘I know! I know!’ she said; ‘but don’t let us part in anger,’ she continued. ‘It’s the last time, maybe, we shall see each other,’ and she threw her arms about his neck.

‘Don’t be so silly, Rose!’ he said sharply. ‘You women have always got some sentimental notions! You might think that I was going away for years, instead of a month or two at the farthest.’

She said nothing, and they sat there in silence; she looked thoroughly crushed in spirits. At length he got up to go.

‘Good-bye, Rose,’ he said, endeavouring to put some feeling into his words. She sprang up, threw her arms again about his neck, and showered burning kisses on his lips. He disengaged himself as gently as he could, kissed her on the forehead, and went out.

When he had gone she stood with her hands clasped, looking at the door through which he had passed.

‘Oh, Darcy! my love! my love!’ she said. ‘I was mad, mad!’ She threw herself into a chair, and held her head tightly between her hands. Then she sprang up and walked hurriedly about the room, now and again exclaiming, ‘My God! my God!’ Finally she threw herself on a sofa and blessed sleep sealed up her weary eyelids.

Darcy’s ideas were very confused about his journey to England, for he intended to go there. He had no settled plan as to what he was to do when he got there. He had never been out of Ireland before; Dublin was his highest conception of grandeur and power in external things. He delayed his journey, thinking of what he should do, but a letter which he received one

day made him come to a decision. It was from old Sir Robert Grant, the master of the hunt. 'Hearing that Mr. Darcy was about to visit England,' so the letter ran, 'Sir Robert Grant begs to send Mr. Darcy a few letters of introduction to friends in England, who will be much pleased to see Mr. Darcy.'

There was also another note, written in a hurried hand, which Darcy read with emotion. It ran :

'MY DEAR DARCY,

I love you as my own son ; for God's sake don't put off your journey any longer—it's your only chance. Good-bye, my boy, God bless you !

' R. GRANT.

'P.S.—The next train leaves for Dublin at 6 p.m., and then you could catch the morning boat.'

Darcy, having read this, reverently kissed the letter.

'Noble old fellow !' he said to himself ; 'it was you who sent me warning. I must take your advice.'

Tom was sent for.

'Tom,' said Darcy, 'you know the work I have been engaged in ; it is a glorious cause, and one that must ultimately succeed. But the suspicion of the authorities has been aroused, and some friends think that I should get out of the way for a short time, so that I intend to start to-night for England. You must drive me to the six o'clock train.'

Tom was astonished. He stood still for a few minutes, as if he had not heard what Darcy said ; but suddenly recollecting himself, 'All right, sur !' he said, and walked hurriedly away.

As they drove to the station Darcy was in high spirits; the thought of getting away from the responsibilities which he had was refreshing. Tom looked very gloomy.

‘Will you be away long, sur?’ he asked.

‘Well, I can’t tell exactly,’ Darcy replied, ‘perhaps a month or two. You must look after things in my absence, and write to me often, telling me how everything is getting on; I’ll let you know my address when I get across.’

‘Very well, sur,’ Tom said, ‘I’ll do me besht; but I hope you’ll not be long.’

‘Well, here we are,’ said Darcy, as they drew up at the station, ‘and here comes the train—just in time.’

After a great bustling about of porters, seeing after his honour’s luggage, the train moved off.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### EXPERIENCE.

‘To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.’

MILTON.

ON the journey to Dublin, Darcy took out the letters of introduction which he had got. There were five in all. He looked over the addresses, and got out a map in the railway guide to find out the different localities. The first he looked at was Kent. ‘Captain Brascombe, Holme House, Woolwich,’ was the address. Then there were two addresses in London, one in Yorkshire, and one in Cheshire. He had to decide which he would

visit first—his choice fell on the captain. ‘I shall feel as Alfred did in the camp of the Danes,’ he said to himself, ‘when at Woolwich, finding out the weak points of the enemy.’ He would leave his other visits to arrange themselves.

Tired with the slow and tortuous journey, he arrived at Dublin. He had scarcely time to get some slight refreshment before he had to hurry off to the boat.

It was a glorious morning as he left Dublin, and his heart leapt up within him as he gazed on the magnificent view of Dublin Bay gained from the deck of an out-bound ship on such a morning.

The lines which Rose Clements had repeated with such fervour came into his mind—

‘Land of my sires, what mortal hand  
Can tear me from thy rugged strand?’

and then Rose Clements herself came before him as he saw her that night, and as he had known her since. As he thought of her, his face grew dark, he shivered as if with cold, and sat down gazing fixedly into the depths. How long he sat there he knew not, but when he awoke to consciousness of things about him he could see the dark mountains of Wales looming in the distance. Watching them coming, as it were, nearer and nearer, his thoughts were turned to a different channel.

How rugged and terrible they looked! How they reared their misty foreheads to the sky! And how fearful they looked! How they would dash the brave men to pieces, who, amidst howling winds, should be pitched against their iron sides! How feeble women would shriek in vain, while their pitiless unmovable

strength saw them perish! 'Pitiless!' something repeated, 'ay, pitiless as yourself!' He clenched his hand and bit his lips; he hurried to speak to someone—it mattered not who. An accident to the engine detained him in Holyhead till far into the night.

Who could ride through North Wales on a glorious spring morning without feeling a genial glow of satisfaction come over his heart? Every turn in the railway reveals new and startling beauties to the eyes of the onlooker. Once through the marshes of Holyhead, the panorama begins. Bangor's fairy-like beauty bursts on the view; Beaumaris sits in quiet grandeur, like a beautiful old grandmother looking into the infinite, whose ears have never been shocked by the fearful shriek of the steam engine. Penmaenmawr darkly frowns; the great Orme's Head thrusts itself defiantly into the ocean, which in return slaps its cheeks in playful mood. Conway's old grey castle, that oft resounded to the strains of the harper and minstrel, and that oft ran red with human gore, too, and shuddered at the din of arms, now peacefully rests; and as it looks down upon the puffing engine beneath its walls, it seems to say, 'Men had to build me in the long ago, so high and broad, so immovable, to show their power; but what changes I have seen! Now they are satisfied with a little thing like you. Ah, well, such is life!'

The train rushes on, and leaves it with its faithful companion, the river, to talk in low murmurs of the happy halcyon past. Then on to Colwyn's wooded heights, where we begin to leave the poetical and mix with the practical.

Passing by all this, with the sun breaking through

the morning clouds, rousing the lark to carol in the day, while the fairies stow away their pearls of dew, to have them ready for Queen Luna's levee, is, indeed, exhilarating. But with one condition, and that a simple one: that you look at it, that you let your sympathies go out towards Nature. Darcy saw none of it. With his hat over his eyes, he lay back in the carriage motionless. Nor had sleep touched him with her wand. A sharp sense of his own dishonour and cowardice stung him as he went along. He roused himself somewhat as the day advanced, and succeeded in partly shaking off the disagreeable feeling of the morning. The speed of the train, and the bustle at the stations arrested his attention. So much seeming irregularity, and yet so much order, surprised him.

He reached London in due time, and drove to an hotel, intending to visit Captain Brascombe next day. He strolled about the streets. The immense throng and the incessant noise, the multitudinous sounds and the slang of the cockneys, the varied faces, representatives of many nations—all left such an impression of confusion and weariness on his mind, that he was glad to get back to his hotel, where he could at least have a partial respite.

Next day he went to Woolwich to find out the captain. He found the address was in a street of shabby-genteel houses. Darcy stood irresolute whether to knock or go away again. He, however, came to the conclusion that to do the latter would be very foolish, as he had come so far to see the captain. He accordingly knocked. The door was opened by a little girl, of whom he asked whether Captain Brascombe were in.

'Yes, sir,' she replied, in quick business-like fashion. 'Come in, sir.' She showed him into a room with the greatest gravity and politeness. 'What name shall I give, sir?' she asked.

'Give the captain this,' Darcy replied, giving her Sir Robert's letter of introduction.

'Yes, sir;' and the little lady bowed and went out.

Darcy looked round the room. It was cleanly and tastefully kept, but the furniture had seen better days. He heard a knock at the door, and the little girl appeared again.

'The captain bids me tell you that he is getting up, sir. He will be down soon. There are some books there, sir, if you care to read.'

'Thank you, my little girl,' Darcy said kindly; for her quaint manners had impressed him favourably. 'Do you all get up late here?' he asked, with a smile.

'Oh dear, no!' she replied, with a wise little laugh. 'You see, the captain has nothing to do, while mother and I must be busy.'

'Oh, I see,' he said. 'You have a busy life, then? Do you work very hard?'

'Now we do, sir. We have all our rooms let; but sometimes we have only two other gentlemen besides the captain, and then we can rest a little. While mother gets their breakfast ready, I take up their shaving water and polish their boots. Six pairs of boots in the morning, sir, is not so much. We have six gentlemen, and the captain,' she explained.

'Hasn't the captain any boots?' asked Darcy, with assumed gravity.

This tickled the little maid's fancy : she laughed a quiet laugh.

'Oh yes, sir,' she said ; 'but he won't let me do them : he does them himself ! And he does not black them half,' she added, with a sagacious smile.

The entrance of the captain himself put a stop to the conversation.

'Hallo !' he said. His voice was like grating thunder. He was about six feet two inches in height, with a bald head, no forehead to speak of, a broken nose, two small grey eyes, with an eye-glass in one, and the rest of his face lost in hair. 'You're a friend of Sir Robert Grant. Glad to see you ;' and he almost shook Darcy's arm from its socket. 'How is the old boy ?' he asked.

'He rides as well to hounds as any of us yet,' Darcy replied.

'Glad to hear it—glad to hear it ! He was always tough—deucid tough ! He nursed me in Jamaica. But you'll want to see the sights about here ?'

'I'm in your hands entirely,' Darcy replied.

The captain put his head out of the door.

'Kitty !' he shouted.

It was some seconds before the reverberation died away.

'Yes, sir,' came the child's treble.

'I'll give you sixpence if you'll give my boots a rub.'

'Thank you, sir.'

'Devilish hard-worked child that,' he remarked to Darcy. 'What do you think of the chance of a war ?' he asked suddenly.

'I can hardly give an opinion,' Darcy replied. 'I suppose there may be one any day.'

‘I wish to goodness there was one. I’d join again if there was. Anything is better than being idle. I suppose *you* have plenty to do?’

‘Oh, a fair amount,’ Darcy said. ‘So much, you see, that I am taking a holiday.’

Kitty brought the boots : the captain stroked her hair, and gave her sixpence.

‘I’m going out, Kitty,’ he said. ‘Have some chops ready for Mr. Darcy and me when we come from the arsenal. That butcher at the corner is better than the other one. You like chops?’ he suddenly asked Darcy.

‘Oh yes,’ the latter replied. ‘Anything will do for me.’

At the arsenal gates were the sentries pacing up and down, who saluted the captain as they passed. It would require a volume to itself to give space enough in which to describe what Darcy saw there. They passed through the room where bullets were made. A boy who finished them, with a serious face offered one to Darcy. The captain saw him, and yelled out :

‘Don’t take it, Darcy!’

But Darcy had taken it, and dropped it immediately. The bullet was hot. They also passed through the room where shells are made; through another where the models lie; through the houses where the heavy guns are made. They saw the giant steam-hammer, the monster guns, and the myriad wonderful sights which present themselves to the visitor.

It was the workpeople’s dinner-hour as they went in, and it was another surprise to Darcy to see the crowds which poured through the gates.

When they came back, they had their chops beauti-

fully done. Darcy was surprised at the way he himself enjoyed the frugal meal. The captain gave him an account of the work at the arsenal as they smoked a pipe afterwards. He told him how many thousand rifles were turned out annually; how many million bullets; how many hundred cannon. He also enumerated the immense stock of war material in store, little thinking that he was causing pain to his visitor.

He made Darcy agree to stay with him that night, and then promised to go to London with him on the following night. They sat up late, for the captain had called out of his memory scenes and incidents in his life in which Darcy was deeply interested

‘Come, come,’ the former said, at last, ‘I believe you would listen to this nonsense till morning. We must go to bed now.’

So saying, he led the way, and showed Darcy to his room.

As Darcy lay in his bed that night, and thought over what he had seen during the day, his heart was sore, for his thoughts went back to the wretched threepence a week by which he and his fellow-patriots were striving to raise a fund for the purchase of arms. How far off the time seemed when they would have a sufficient number to use with any effect!

‘They could afford to present us with one hundred thousand rifles,’ he said to himself, bitterly and hopelessly, ‘and we could do nothing satisfactory with them. Oh, my poor country, my poor country!’ he said aloud. ‘No hope, no hope!’

He spent a restless night.

At length, tired of tossing about, he got up, and lit

his candle. He looked to see if there were any books in the room—any one, he felt, would have helped him to pass the time. He could not find one, but then, he remembered, there were some in the room downstairs—he knew the way, and would get one. He went downstairs cautiously, and opened the door of the room where he spent the previous evening. No sooner had he done so, than a snore like the roll of a drum startled him. There was but one man, he felt, who could produce that effect, and that man was the captain. He raised the candle above his head, and by its light saw him asleep on the sofa. Darcy hesitated whether he ought to awaken him, but he decided not to do so,—he accordingly shut the door quickly, and went back to bed.

He never dreamt that the captain had given up his own room for him, and that consequently his sleeping on the sofa was Hobson's choice.

Next morning, the captain took him immediately after breakfast to see the artillery and cavalry drill on the common. He had seen infantry drill before, but never the artillery and cavalry. It was another blow to his hopes. He had thought, that, in the course of time, by dint of hard work by night, the members in his district could be got into something like order, and would be able, rifle in hand, to meet the foe—but he now found out that there were many things he had not taken into account. He stood still, gazing in wonder at the marvellous evolutions of the artillery as they wheeled round and round and in and out. The cavalry, too, in the distance, galloping at full speed, with helmets shining in the morning sun, looked terrible—he had never seen a grander sight, he thought.

'Come along, my dear fellow,' said the captain, somewhat amused. 'You need not waste such a fine morning looking at a few troops going through such ordinary exercise.'

He then took Darcy to the academy, where clever youths study the art of war in the intervals between their pleasures.

'I am supposed to be leader,' he said to himself, 'and what training have I had for it?'

He could not give himself a satisfactory answer.

The captain afterwards took him through the barracks, and explained the various parts of such a building to him.

In the evening, they went together to London; they looked together over the list of amusements for the night. The captain suggested a comic opera, which was in the list, but, as he did so, Darcy's eye caught sight of 'Shakespearian Revival: "Julius Cæsar."' That was what he wanted. He pointed it out with glee to his friend, and the latter, seeing that he was pleased, agreed to go. The captain slept through the greater part of the play, but Darcy was intensely interested. As real as the characters were to Tom when Darcy read the play to him, so real were they to himself when he saw it acted.

When the captain afterwards remarked: 'What a fine girl that was, who took the part of Portia!' it seemed flat blasphemy to Darcy's ears.

The next few days they visited various places of amusement; saw conjuring, dancing, athleticism, etc., *ad nauseam*. They visited the Row at the fashionable hour, where Darcy was guilty of asking the silly ques-

tion, 'Why don't they take a gallop into the country if they wish to have exercise?' The captain laughed at it, and tried to give his uninformed friend a lesson in the habits of London society, which Darcy was very slow indeed to learn. To him, as a stranger, the greater part seemed absurd, and he said so, making no allowance for the fact that the people he saw had grown into these habits almost unconsciously, till at last they had as great hold on their minds as a religious belief has on its devotees.

Darcy had been by this time in London almost a week, so he determined to start in a day or two to see fresh scenes. In the last day of his stay, the captain took him to Greenwich to see the various things to be seen there, but especially the Observatory.

While going over it he noticed that two Americans were having various things explained to them by the courteous officials. One of them got very excited over the scientific facts which were being related to him. 'He guessed that he didn't know much about it. He supposed that it was all true! But there was one thing he had heard of when at school, and that was the first meridian. He should like to see that first meridian, just to let folks know when he got home what it was like.' He seemed very much disappointed when the grave-faced official informed him that he would have to get special permission to view it from the first Lord of the Admiralty.

Darcy left the place laughing, while the captain employed himself in cursing the stupidity of Yankees.

The next day Darcy had decided on leaving. The captain bade him good-bye in the morning, saying that

he was sorry that he could not see him off, as he had an engagement to attend to. Darcy made him promise that he would visit him and Sir Robert the following year. He had drawn such a picture of shooting, hunting, fishing, etc., that the captain, after much hesitation, had yielded and made the promise. Darcy started in the afternoon; before he went, of course, he asked for his bill, but what was his astonishment when he was told that it was paid.

‘Paid!’ he exclaimed. ‘Who paid it?’

‘Captain Brascombe, sir,’ was the reply.

He knew not what to say, for he felt vexed at this trick of the captain, though few people would feel much embarrassment under the circumstances.

As he went along in the train, he debated with himself whether he should send a cheque to his friend to reimburse him; but the more he thought of it, the more he became convinced that it would be unkind to do so; on the contrary, he determined to write the captain a humorous letter on the subject, thanking him for his kindness.

Having settled the matter satisfactorily in his own mind, his thoughts were free to meditate on other matters connected with his visit to London. That visit had filled his mind with one thought, which was not a pleasant one; it forced on his mind, and made him realise, the riches and great power of England, the oppressor of his country, as he thought. He felt that physical force would be useless for the purpose of liberating his country, and he determined that when he should go back he would not hold out hopes to his

ignorant countrymen which he felt sure could not for years and years to come be fulfilled.

What other means were left, now that physical force had to be abandoned? He thought again and again over this problem on his journey. He wearied himself to find a solution, but none came. He felt tired of his mental labour, and lay back in the carriage to sleep, if possible. How he wished now that that gentle image which he could call at will in boyhood would now look down upon him! How soothing those kindly eyes would be! But in vain he wished, and in vain he had wished for many a day, that this loved visitant from the misty beyond would keep him company as of yore. 'Why?' he asked himself, and the answer came with thunder force against his conscience, 'Why ask?' it said. 'The pure and impure cannot dwell together. Darkness swallows up the light.' He groaned, and turned his head as if in pain.

The train stopped, and the hurry and the bustle of the large railway station roused him. He asked the name of the station, and to his astonishment found that it was the one at which he was to get out. Time had passed so quickly as he thought, that the journey seemed very short. Night was drawing nigh as he left the railway station and took a cab for an hotel.

When he awoke in the morning he felt in the best of spirits, he knew not why, he knew not how. Hope once more set her sails in his boat, the sun was shining o'er the ocean of his life, a gentle breeze was blowing, and everything seemed to augur a prosperous voyage, and he felt like setting out anew into another world, into another sphere—whither, he knew not. He looked at

his letter of introduction—'Mr. Mayhew, Pinewood House,' was on it. He inquired the way, and soon found himself near it.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### AN INTRODUCTION.

'I watch thy grace, and in its place  
My heart a charmed slumber keeps,  
While I muse upon thy face.'

A. TENNYSON.

THE approach to the house was singularly fine. Masses of brilliant foliage were on either hand as he walked along, decorating huge trees, which reminded him of his own in Ireland. Underfoot the avenue was splendidly kept. This feature of it brought to mind the drive to Captain Gore's house, and the contrast made him smile. After he had walked for almost five minutes, the avenue turned to the right, and brought into view a small lake, which it skirted on one side; another turn to the left past the lake brought him within full view of the house.

There was not much architectural beauty about it. It was simply a massive square-built house. The scrupulous cleanliness and neatness of everything outside, however, gave it a charm.

He found Mr. Mayhew a man about sixty, with a kind and noble, yet wearied-looking face. He quickly read Sir Robert Grant's letter, and then, taking Darcy's hand, he shook it heartily.

‘You are welcome, Mr. Darcy,’ he said. ‘Any friend of Sir Robert is a friend of mine.’

Darcy thanked him.

‘And how is Sir Robert?’ he asked. ‘Dear old boy!’ he went on, without waiting for an answer, ‘it’s twenty years since I saw him! Twenty years!’ and he paused for a few minutes, with his head slightly bowed and his arms folded.

In those few minutes that wonderful power was exercised which is possessed by frail humanity, and which gives us some insight into how the Deity can view at once all thoughts and actions—the power of bringing before the mind in rapid succession the thoughts and the scenes of the past. There they go, in swift array, the buried ghosts of the past!

‘Twenty years!’ he said slowly, as he raised his head. Then, suddenly arousing himself, ‘I must really beg your pardon, Mr. Darcy, for keeping you waiting. The name of Sir Robert recalled scenes long since past. Of course, you know about Sir Robert?’

Darcy had to confess that he only knew him slightly.

‘Well, I’ll tell you about him to-night. Come along with me now and see my family. I should have taken you long since. This way!’

He led Darcy into a room where sat a lady, who was introduced as Mrs. Mayhew. There were also in the room two younger ladies, who were introduced by Mr Mayhew as ‘My daughters, Caroline and Emily.’

That the lady was much younger than her husband Darcy could see at a glance. She received him with politeness, nothing more—not even her husband’s en-

thusiastic introduction of him, 'Mr. Darcy, friend of my dear old Sir Robert, of whom you have all heard me speak so often. Sir Robert asks us to look after him, and to try to make him at home for a short time; and we shall see whether English people can't do it, shall we not, my dear?' could make her different.

Her daughters seemed copies of her. One of them was working a piece of embroidery when Darcy was introduced to her; she bowed slightly, and went on with her work. The other happened to be looking out of the window at the time; she turned half round, bowed slightly, and, with something very like a yawn, took up a book and pretended to read. They were evidently used to receiving visitors. A shadow crossed Mr. Mayhew's face, but he spoke with cheerfulness notwithstanding.

'Mr. Darcy and I will take a stroll to see the place, my dear, and we shall be back for dinner. Good-bye, then, for the present, Carrie; good-bye, Emily.'

'Good-bye, papa,' they replied wearily.

Darcy bowed, and went out with Mr. Mayhew.

'We'll take a walk round the grounds, if you have no objection,' Mr. Mayhew said.

'I shall only be too glad,' Darcy replied, 'for all day yesterday I was cramped up in a railway train, and it does one good to breathe such pure air as this.'

'You are right, Mr. Darcy; there is nothing like getting out into the fresh air under the freedom of the heavens.'

He spoke with a meaning, but Darcy would not see it.

'Suppose we go round by the lake, Mr. Darcy?'

'Anywhere you wish,' Darcy replied.

They descended towards the lake. When they came in view of it, Mr. Mayhew stopped and shaded his eyes with his hand, for the sun was shining powerfully.

'There they are! there they are!' he exclaimed joyfully. 'Let us go down to them!' and he walked quickly in the direction of the lake, Darcy following.

Looking in the direction whither they were going, Darcy saw a boy and girl, probably between six and nine years of age, pulling flowers and blossoms from the various plants which grew around, and running in great glee with them to someone who sat on the grass and wove them into a wreath.

As they got nearer the children saw them, and came running to meet Mr. Mayhew.

'Oh, papa! papa!' they exclaimed; 'such fun! we have pulled ever so many flowers, and Grace told us all their names, and she is going to make a grand wreath of them!'

Mr. Mayhew snatched them up one after the other, and kissed them passionately.

'You do love your papa, don't you, Bob?' he asked.

'Yes, papa,' Bob replied.

'And you too, Meg, don't you?'

'Yes, papa,' Meg too replied, as she twined her little arms around his neck.

Mr. Mayhew kissed her again.

'And we are going to crown dear Grace with the wreath, papa,' Meg went on, continuing the broken-off little tale, 'and then she'll be queen of the May—won't she, papa?'

‘Yes, my child. But now run and tell this gentleman that you are glad to see him.’

And away they ran to Darcy, and thrust their little hands into his as if they had known him all their lives, telling him at the same time about their wonderful wreath.

In the meantime Mr. Mayhew had gone to where Grace was, a few yards in front. Darcy could see her beautiful, pensive face light up with a glad smile as Mr. Mayhew approached her. He started. Where did he see that face before? He knew it, he was certain. He thought a moment—he remembered it was the face on which he had gazed so long at the ball—the face which had entranced him; the face which John Gaunt drew him away from to listen to plans for the redemption of his country.

‘Grace, my child,’ Mr. Mayhew said, as he placed his hand reverentially on her head. ‘I wish you many, very many, happy returns of your birthday! The children and I are the only ones who notice it, but I hope our gratitude to you will help to make the day cheerful.’

Darcy had by this time come up to where they stood, and Mr. Mayhew introduced him to Miss Hawthorne. Having done this, he walked on quickly, calling to the children, who still held Darcy’s hands.

‘Come Bob! come Meg! Who can catch me first?’ and away the little ones scampered after him, laughing merrily.

‘What splendid children they are!’ Darcy exclaimed with admiration.

‘Indeed they are,’ Grace assented. ‘I do not know how I could live without them.’

'How fond Mr. Mayhew is of them,' Darcy remarked.

'And they of him,' she added. 'I always try to teach them to honour and love their parents.'

'Your teaching is very effectual,' he said, with a smile.

'Not as effectual as I should wish,' she said. 'If I could only get them to love their mother as they do their father, I should be satisfied.'

Darcy was at a loss to know what to say to this.

They walked on for a minute or two in silence. At length she said, as if she had known him for a long time:

'Poor Mr. Mayhew, I know something has troubled him to-day. He is quite different when he is in his ordinary mood. I wonder what it can be?' Darcy had often noticed that people had made a confidant of him, without any wish on his part to be treated so, and without any guarantee of his fidelity on their part. He listened as she spoke. He thought he knew the reason, but the melody of her voice was so sweet that he wished to hear her speak again. 'Usually,' she continued, 'he is business-like and somewhat sober, sometimes hard in his manner, though of course, always kind. To-day he is pitiful and tender; I have seldom seen him as he is to-day.'

'Perhaps I can tell you the reason, Miss Hawthorne,' Darcy said. She looked at him in beautiful astonishment. 'It is merely a surmise on my part. I should say, however,' he went on, 'I brought him a letter of introduction from an old friend of his to-day, and when he read it he seemed to be altogether unconscious of my presence for a few minutes. I dare say it brought back many events which he had forgotten, for he said it was twenty years since he saw his friend.'

‘ “The past is busy at my heart,  
Dear as the mem’ry of an absent friend.” ’

she said in a low voice, quoting from a poem that she loved.

Then they turned a corner in the walk, and a few yards before them were Mr. Mayhew and the children, he holding up Meg to pull some blossoms, while Bob caught them as she threw them down.

‘Oh, Grace! Grace!’ Bob cried out. ‘Isn’t papa good? We’re getting such splendid flowers; they’ll make grand wreaths, won’t they, Grace dear?’

‘Yes, Bob, splendid wreaths. We can decorate the nursery with them; can we not, Bob?’

‘Yes; and I’ll put one on my soldier! and won’t it be fun!’ Bob exclaimed, laughing in anticipation of the sight.

‘And one on my doll, too, Bob,’ said Meg from above.

‘Oh, yes; you can both have one,’ Grace said.

‘And one on papa’s hat!’ Bob exclaimed, laughing again at his own ingenuity.

Mr. Mayhew put down Meg, and shook his fist at Bob. Bob ran away, his papa ran after him; Meg ran after both, Grace after Meg, and Darcy, he knew not why, ran too, and catching Meg, lifted her into the air, as she screamed with delight. When he put her on the ground she wanted him to repeat the operation, which he had to do several times.

‘Hark, children!’ said Mr. Mayhew. ‘There’s the dinner-bell. We must go back.’ They turned towards the house, Mr. Mayhew leading Bob by the hand, and Darcy carrying Meg, who put her chubby little arm about his neck. Grace followed with her hat in her

hand, and a variety of blossoms, flowers, and leaves in her arms.

Mrs. Mayhew met them at the house ; she had a displeased look on her face. ' You should have brought the children in sooner, Miss Hawthorne,' she said. ' It begins to get damp about this time ; besides, they are in such an untidy state, it will take ages to get them ready for dinner.'

' That will do, my dear,' Mr. Mayhew said, in a tone of voice which she understood ; ' I kept them out.' She said no more, but went into the house.

The dinner was a very formal affair. Darcy, of course, strove to make himself agreeable. He started a variety of topics, but they fell flat. He asked Miss Caroline her opinion on various events which were then happening in the social and political world, but neither Miss Caroline nor Miss Emily knew much about them ; or if they did know, did not wish to put themselves to the trouble of speaking about them. Darcy was heartily glad when the meal was over.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### MAMMON.

' Let my lonely life creep into your warm bosom,  
Knowing no other rest but this.'

ADAM MENKEN.

THAT night the two gentlemen sat up later than the others in a small room which was set apart for Mr. Mayhew's private use.

'Twenty years ago,' said Mr. Mayhew, when both had lit their cigars, and had puffed for a few minutes in silence, 'twenty years ago I saw Robert Grant last.'

'So you said this morning,' Darcy remarked.

'Very well,' Mr. Mayhew went on; 'now I shall tell you how I knew him first. Of course, you know that Sir Robert belongs to one of the old families in your country. Of course, when I say old, I mean that his family has been in a prominent position for a long time.'

Darcy nodded. 'I understand,' he said.

'Well, his father was a man who took a great share in political life. Electioneering expenses are no trifle now, but they are as nothing to what they were then, and he got deeply involved in debt through standing for his native county. The estate had been in a bad way before, but this sunk it deeper in debt, so that when Sir Robert came into the property, there was absolutely nothing for him. In fact, the estate was soon afterwards put to the hammer. Sir Robert was not the man to see his estates slip out of the family without some exertion on his part to get them back. He was able to raise some money—for he had some good friends—with which he came to England. He determined to try his fortune in the West Indies. I met him here, and, as I had experience in the branch of trade which he was about to engage in, we formed a partnership. We were not merely joined in business; we were friends in the proper sense of the word. Through many a difficulty we forced our way together, often struggling through hard times and hoping for better. At length we were successful, and after a time we started back for England and rest. Sir

Robert bought his estates back again, and revived his name. The rest of his life you know, I dare say, better than I do. I was not long in England before I found that I was, what I might have known I should be, a stranger in a strange land. My old friends were dead or gone away, and those who were left were changed, as, of course, I also was. I wandered about from place to place, but was not happy. At length I joined business once more, and was myself again. Then I married and gave up business. I built this house because my wife wished it. For my part, a much smaller one would have suited me better; but one cannot always expect to have one's way. My wife is fond of society, and has high hopes and aspirations for the future of our daughters. I do not care for the superficial babble of drawing-rooms. My life is in the past, and if my wife could only enter into my feelings a little, I should be the happiest man alive.'

Mr. Mayhew was one of those unfortunate men who can never look at their wives without inwardly registering an 'if.'

'My daughters,' he went on, 'when they were children, were a great source of comfort to me; but when they grew up, my wife induced me to send them to a fashionable boarding-school, where they took whatever was natural in them out of them, and in its place put some artificial stuff which is not fit to carry them even through a headache. My two youngest children are at present a great delight to me, but I suppose they will one day be as the others.'

'I'm sure, Mr. Mayhew,' Darcy said, interrupting him, 'that you take much too gloomy a view. Why,

sir, many a man would think himself in Paradise if he had such a wife and family as you have.'

'True—true!' Mr. Mayhew assented. 'I suppose I'm an ungrateful wretch. What would a man have? There's Grace,' he went on, 'a blessing to any house! You are right, Mr. Darcy, I am ungrateful.'

They smoked on in silence for some time.

'Who is Grace?' Darcy asked abruptly.

'Her father,' Mr. Mayhew explained, 'was a junior partner in our concern when we gave it up. He continued it for ten years; it went on satisfactorily, but then reverses came, and he was ruined. The blow killed him. Grace was then but a child, and she was brought by her mother to England. Of course, Grant and I gave her a little assistance. After a few year's residence here she died, leaving Grace to me.'

'Another example of the fickleness of fortune,' Darcy said.

'It may seem so to you, a stranger,' Mr. Mayhew replied; 'but I fancy he had a great deal to do with his misfortune himself; and, from a long experience, I am inclined to believe that we are ourselves the makers of our own happiness, and that the jade Fortune whom we so often speak of is but an imaginary being. But the time is getting on, Mr. Darcy; we had better get to bed. I have spoken to you to-night very plainly, so that you may understand that there is no lack of welcome to a friend of Robert Grant.'

'Thank you, Mr. Mayhew,' Darcy said; 'I can quite understand.'

Next morning Darcy was very much surprised to find Mrs. Mayhew receiving him with the warmest of smiles,

and the Misses Mayhew seconding her with great earnestness. They hoped he had slept well, that the wind did not disturb him, etc., etc. During breakfast they were really charming. He thought Mr. Mayhew was all smiles too, for he was pleased to see Sir Robert's friend made welcome.

The fact of the matter was, that Mrs. Mayhew, in the region which poor Mr. Caudle knew so well, had found out that Mr. Darcy was rich, and, what was of equal importance, that he was single.

Grace spoke very little at breakfast. Darcy looked in her direction several times, but her eyes were turned away. Yet he thought that he detected an indignant flush on her face.

It was proposed that they should go for a drive, as it was a beautiful morning. Then someone suggested that one or two of the party should ride, and finally it was decided that Darcy and Miss Caroline should ride and the others drive.

The ladies had gone to get ready, and Mr. Mayhew had gone out, so that Darcy was left alone in the room with Grace.

'Are you not going, Miss Hawthorne?' he asked.

'Oh dear no, Mr. Darcy!' she exclaimed, with a surprised little laugh. 'I have got my duties to attend to, you know. Bob and Meg and I shall enjoy ourselves in the meadows. We have that wreath to finish, and I promised to paint Rollo, the pony that you see down there, for them.'

'I wish I could be with you,' he said, somewhat dreamily.

She raised her eyes and looked at him with a puzzled expression on her face, but she said nothing.

‘Miss Hawthorne,’ Darcy said slowly, ‘something vexed you at breakfast time. What was it?’

‘Vexed me, Mr. Darcy?’

‘Yes, Miss Hawthorne, vexed you. I want to know what it was. Won’t you tell me, Miss Hawthorne?’ he asked, seeing her silent.

Then there was a noise in the passage.

‘Won’t you tell me, Miss Hawthorne?’ he asked hurriedly.

‘Yesterday you were Lazarus, to-day you are Dives,’ she said, as she left the room.

Darcy had not time to think over her words, for Mr. Mayhew entered.

‘A glorious day, Mr. Darcy,’ he said. ‘We shall take you through our celebrated county. We intend to go to the top of that hill you see in the distance, as there is a splendid view from there. It will be something new for you to see a county like this.’

As Grace sketched Rollo that day amidst the long grass and the flowers, and song of birds and hum of bees, many a time the brush lay idly in her fingers and a far-away look came into her eyes, and only Bob’s impatient question, as he held the pony, ‘Is he finished yet, Grace?’ brought her to her senses. For who was this stranger, with his earnest eyes which seemed to look into her soul, who took such an interest in her? Where did he come from? What did it all mean? Such thoughts repeated themselves again and again.

To Darcy that day, as he rode by the side of Miss Caroline, Grace’s words were recalled again and again

by the conversation which took place between them. She worshipped riches, that could easily be seen ; society came next in her estimation ; while worth and integrity were qualities which did not enter into her estimate of anyone. Her mother and sister, too, he could see, were formed on the same model, for when Mr. Mayhew called Darcy's attention to something in the scenery worth looking at, they could not talk about it for a minute without branching off into their two ideas—money and society.

They reached the foot of the hill, and left the carriage and horses, so that all might walk up together. The way led up a narrow paved road, in places cut out of the solid sandstone rock. The rock on either side was surmounted by a wall, over which, here and there, the ivy had festooned itself gracefully. Large houses in beautiful gardens covered the hillside, and now and then, as they went up, the gay flower-beds peeped out through the wicket-gates. Mr. Mayhew told Darcy that these were all quite new. Alas, not new enough to have no tales to tell !

Suddenly they came to a point where a beautiful panorama was spread out before them. Down below them lay the plain of Cheshire, well filled with trees of various kinds, which, at this season, had just burst forth in their fresh spring dress ! Black and white farm-houses peeped out through the trees ; the white roads twisted their way, now appearing, now disappearing, through the country. The white and red kine appeared as specks on the delicate green background. The farmers here and there followed the plough. One man, to Darcy, seemed very absurd. There was an immense

pile of earth which this man was carrying away with a wheelbarrow; the man looked so small, his progress seemed so slow, that it struck him as a very absurd sight. What a way to spend one's life, he thought! A haze hung over all, through which they could just see a village with red bricked houses, and beyond it water like a splash of quicksilver. Darcy had never looked on such a scene before.

There lay the plain, with its inhabitants working away for dear life, with the haze about them and encircling them—few caring to look through it or above it! It brought back the sea on a calm day to his mind, the haze on the outer verge of the plain gave one so much the idea of infinity which the sea so forcibly brings home. He was thinking of the image borrowed from such a scene as this which the poet uses—

‘And if he gain  
To raise to his own height the simple souls  
That dwell upon the plains, the untutored thought,  
The museless lives, the unawakened brain  
That yet might soar—then is he blest indeed.  
But, if he fail, then, leaving love behind  
The wider love of the race, the closer love  
Of some congenial soul, he turns again  
To the old difficult steep, and there alone  
Dwells, till the widowed passions of his heart  
Tear him and rend his soul, and drive him down  
To the low plains he left—’

when he was called back from dreamland by Miss Caroline's voice.

‘Is the scenery on your property anything like this?’ she asked.

He gave a slight start, then, recollecting himself:

‘Oh, not at all, Miss Mayhew,’ he replied; ‘it is very

unlike this—much wilder. But this is very peaceful and charming !

‘A capital place for a picnic, is it not, Mr. Darcy ? Last year we had such picnics here ! Lord Starke used often to drop down on us—accidentally, as it were. You know Lord Starke ?’ Darcy shook his head. ‘He’s immensely rich,’ Miss Caroline went on, ‘though very ugly ; but he can make himself quite agreeable, I declare.’

From this topic Miss Mayhew led her listener on to the balls she had enjoyed during the winter months, giving a description of the different dresses, of which affairs her listener knew as little as the man in the moon. She also mentioned the names of the richest and most titled people she had danced with ; after which she stopped, to note the effect on Darcy of these revelations.

He, finding that he was expected to say something, exclaimed, ‘Oh, indeed !’

She thought she detected a little jealousy in this ‘Oh, indeed !’ but she was never more mistaken in her life, for he perhaps had not heard half of the rubbish she had been talking.

Mrs. Mayhew had drawn away Mr. Mayhew and Miss Emily to another part of the hill. They now appeared, Mrs. Mayhew and Miss Emily smiling, and Mr. Mayhew looking cross, and puffing with his exertions.

They descended the hill, and went back in the same order that they came.

Weeks passed by, and still Darcy was induced by Mrs. Mayhew to stay longer, for had not Miss Caroline one night, after walking with Darcy for hours in the

moonlight, come in with a wearied look on her face, and in answer to her mother's question, 'Well, my child, is it all right?' answered petulantly: 'It's all wrong, mamma! He didn't speak to me about anything of the sort, and I don't believe he means to do it either!' And had not Mrs. Mayhew cheered her up, and told her that it would be all right—that it only needed patience?

Darcy, during these weeks, had often managed to talk with Grace. Now he would come on her as she sketched an evening scene, now as she walked with the children through the lanes gathering wild flowers; sometimes he was alone with her in the house. These were blessed moments to him, for at such times she spoke of the true and beautiful things of life, the high ideal, the noble purpose, the resolute endeavour. She pointed out to him the beauties of nature: the common, simple things which he had passed by before, and never given a thought to, were endued with life and beauty when she spoke of them. She had no unkind words for anyone. She pitied those who were the slaves of society or of fashion, and that was the extent of her ill-will.

In her company Darcy felt his old self come back; the old self that roamed the woods and climbed the towers, that read the stories of the heroes of the past lying under the mighty oaks, that revelled in nature, that communed with the beautiful face which looked down upon him from the azure.

Darcy had stayed on a week longer, and as yet Miss Caroline was no nearer his heart. As a last resource Mrs. Mayhew determined to give a dinner-party, and to ask a certain young man who was always attentive

to Miss Caroline, but who had very little money. 'Jealousy,' she thought, 'will bring him to the point, if anything will.' But she was wrong, for Darcy allowed the young man to flirt to his heart's content, and she looked in vain for those bitter glances which jealous people are supposed to cast at rivals.

There was in Grace's eyes that night a trustful, loving look whenever they rested on Darcy, and in his a proud and contented one, for had he not, in one precious hour beneath the stars, before the ball began, poured out his soul to her?

'Oh, Grace, Grace,' he said, 'I have sought you through the years; you alone are able to raise me to the heights once more; duty was dying within me, Grace, but the sight of you has revived it, and revived every generous and noble feeling that ever I felt. I have no perfection to offer you. I come battered and bleeding from the struggle with the world. I come to you, Grace, to soothe me. I know you won't, I know you can't refuse, Grace! Oh, such a depth of love is stored up here in my heart for you! You will, won't you, Grace, let me lay my wearied head upon your breast?'

He turned to her and saw the tears trickling down; she held out her arms, and he caught her to his heart. Just then, with dazed eyes, he saw another face come between them, with rich, dark hair floating in dishevelled masses about it. He put up his hand quickly to brush away the unwelcome sight.

'What is it, love?' Grace asked.

'Oh nothing, nothing,' he stammered. 'I thought I felt a bat brush my face with its wings; let us go in.'

One long kiss, and Grace, with fairy feet, tripped hurriedly indoors. Darcy stood looking after her.

‘What matters?’ he said defiantly. ‘She shall live and laugh, and never know.’

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### TWO WAYS OF LOOKING AT THINGS.

‘She half enclosed me with her arms,  
She pressed me with a meek embrace,  
And bending back her head, look’d up,  
And gazed upon my face.’

S. COLERIDGE.

THE morning after the party Darcy received the following note :

‘SIR,—The executive begs to remind you that the present is a time of great trial and danger to the interests of the society. The absence of the leaders of the people at such a crisis may seriously endanger the loyalty of the people to our principles, while their presence would be a guarantee that they meant to share the common danger, and it would also increase the fidelity of the people to the cause. The executive is sure that it has only to lay the state of the case before you, and that your high sense of duty will dictate the proper course for you to pursue.’

John Gaunt knew Darcy’s character well when he got the above letter sent. He knew that an appeal to his sense of duty would not be in vain, and he was

right. He had his own reasons for wishing Darcy back again, where he could be under his own special notice. Darcy was not long in coming to a conclusion with regard to the note he had received, for by that day's post he sent a reply saying that he would be back in a few weeks at the farthest.

And now he had to see Grace, and talk it over with her. He wandered indoors and out of doors, but could not find her; at length he learned from one of the servants that she had gone with the children for a walk. Darcy followed, and after a quarter of an hour's fast walking he came across the little party very intently pulling wild forget-me-nots in the hedgerows. As he got near them he moderated his speed, and approached in the most unconcerned manner, for he had learned that children have a knack of seeing and hearing what people do not intend them to discover.

Bob was the first to see him, and he communicated the fact by a wild yell as he rushed to Darcy and grasped him by the legs. Then Meg came running, and, taking his hand, began pulling him towards the flowers. He would have found it difficult to go with her had not Bob just then let go his legs and joined Meg in pulling him. Grace looked on with a happy smile.

After a time the children ran on in front, and Darcy walked slowly after them with Grace.

'Grace,' he said, when the children had gone a good way in front, 'I have this morning received an important letter from Ireland, which will hasten my departure from England. I must go back in a week or two at the farthest.' He waited to see what effect his words would have on her, but she showed no visible emotion,

and they walked on in silence. 'I cannot conceal from you, Grace,' he continued, 'that my presence in Ireland will be attended with danger, but when duty calls we must not think of these things.'

'True,' she said; 'I'm proud to hear you say so.'

'I can scarcely bear the thought, Grace,' he went on, 'of going back to my house. It will be very lonely. You have no idea what a miserable life I live there sometimes, and now it will be doubly so since I have known you, Grace. But I must not think of these things—it would be a sin to bring you where there is any danger. In a short time I hope affairs will be more settled, and then——' he hesitated a moment, but before he could go on Grace had linked one arm in his, and raised her beautiful eyes—oh so pitifully, so beseechingly!—to his.

'Don't leave me,' she said. 'Take me with you.'

He clasped her in his arms, and showered kisses on her lips. It was settled. Arguments, doubts, fears, all had vanished. They stood for a few moments forgetful of the world, lost in their own happiness. When they at length became conscious of things around them, they saw Bob standing before them in dumb astonishment, with his little hands behind his back. How long he had been there they could not tell. They looked at him for a moment in amazement, then both simultaneously burst into laughter at the absurdity of the situation.

'How long have you been here, Bob?' Grace asked, but Bob did not answer; he seemed to be trying to solve this new problem in his youthful experience. Suddenly he looked as if he had given it up, and, without a word,

he turned and ran after Meg, no doubt to consult with her on the matter.

This was rather awkward, both thought, for Bob would be sure to tell his mother, or to let what he saw ooze out somehow. They finally came to the conclusion that Darcy should tell Mr. Mayhew first, and that afterwards the ladies of the house should be taken into his confidence.

When they got back, Darcy found Mr. Mayhew, and asked him for a private interview. The old man was very bitter at first when he heard the announcement.

'Just like them all,' he said: 'false! false!' He was also angry. 'Why should you,' he said to Darcy, 'a guest in my house, take the opportunity to rob me of my only comfort? It's a poor return indeed for my hospitality!'

In this strain he went on for a considerable time: his words implying bitterness, anger, and grief. At length he was silent.

Darcy kept very cool. He now reminded Mr. Mayhew that a man could not be robbed of what did not belong to him; that Grace was her own mistress; and that whatever kindness she had received he was sure, from what he had seen, had been amply paid back by her services. And then he asked what Mr. Mayhew would have her do? Would he be so selfish as to wish her to live with him all his days, and afterwards to be thrown on the world?

His words had their effect on the old man.

'You are right—you are right, my friend,' he said. 'I am very selfish indeed. Poor Grace! God bless her! I hope you both will be happy.'

‘No fear of that, sir,’ said Darcy, with a smile.

‘She shall not go with you penniless,’ Mr. Mayhew said. ‘You were right in saying that we owe her a great deal. On her wedding-day I’ll make a settlement for her, so that she may never want, when perhaps both you and I, my friend, have left her alone.’

When Darcy broke the news to Mrs. Mayhew, she was very much astonished, but she controlled herself, and wished they would be happy, and so forth. When she was alone with her daughter, her real sentiments broke out :

‘Oh, the bold jade!’ she exclaimed. ‘With her quiet and gentle manner, indeed! and she looks so innocent, too! But she has taken us all in! Oh, the vixen!’

‘Mamma dear,’ lisped Miss Emily, ‘don’t put yourself about for such a creature: she’s not worth it.’

‘Nor he either,’ chimed in Miss Caroline. ‘Such a woman as you, mamma dear, should not trouble yourself about an Irish adventurer.’

Mrs. Mayhew was flattered by her daughters’ attention.

‘These friends of your father will be the death of me,’ she said.

‘It’s a great shame, I’m sure,’ Miss Caroline responded. ‘He ought to be more careful about those he admits to our society.’

‘He ought indeed,’ Miss Emily assented.

‘Well, my dears, I’ll take your advice. We shall say no more about them, except to wish them out of the house as soon as possible.’

With these words, Mrs. Mayhew wound up the conversation.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## IN VINO VERITAS.

'Friendship! to be two in one—  
Let the canting liar pack!'

A. TENNYSON.

IN about a week after the events recorded in the last chapter, Gaunt left Darcy's house with the intention of visiting Father John. There was a near way over the fields, which he took in preference to that by the road, for he had a suspicion that his movements were watched; hence he took the least public way. As he went along, it was evident that he had been drinking rather freely, for now and then he stumbled, and anon he sang a snatch of a song. After repeating this performance some time, he began to walk more steadily.

As he was about to cross a stile into a field where a number of cows were grazing, he heard someone singing. He listened intently. The voice was a girl's; it was a sweet plaintive voice—even the cows lifted their heads from the dewy grass to listen. Gaunt looked cautiously over the wall, and saw the singer coming. She had a milk-can on her arm, and looked the picture of health and contentment. He had seen her before, he remembered. She was Kathleen O'Rorke, the daughter of the farmer whose land he was on. As she came nearer, he could distinguish the words she sang:

'She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps,  
And lovers are round her sighing.  
But coldly she turns from their gaze and weeps,  
For her heart in his grave is lying.'

In a few minutes she had ceased singing, and was getting ready to milk. He crossed the stile, and accosted her.

‘Good-evening, fair maid,’ he said, in his blandest tones.

He had startled her a little, but she quickly recovered herself. She gave him one searching look: it was enough—she knew him.

‘Good-evenin’ kindly, sur,’ she said, in a friendly tone.

‘Where might you be going, my pretty maid?’ he asked.

Upon hearing this question, she assumed an air of childish simplicity.

‘I might be goin’ to Dublin, but I’m not,’ she replied.

‘No, I don’t mean that,’ he said. ‘Where are you going?’

‘I’m goin’ across the field, sur.’

‘Where to?’

‘The other side, sur.’

‘But, my dear,’ he persisted, ‘you do not understand me. I asked you where you were going?’

‘Where was I goin’?’

‘Yes, where were you going?’

‘Well, sur, I was goin’ to town yestherday, but me muther wouldn’t let me.’

‘Excuse me, fair damsel,’ he said, with a bow, thinking her at the same time too stupid for anything. ‘I don’t want to know what your mother said. I’ll bid you good-bye.’

‘Good-bye, sur,’ she said, in such a sweet tone that he hesitated about going. Seeing him hesitate, she said:

‘Won’t yer honour have a dhrink av milk? If you wait a few minits, I’ll milk wan av the cows.’

‘Oh, thank you, thank you,’ he said; ‘but it’s too much trouble.’

‘Och, no throuble at all, sur,’ she said. ‘I’ll be highly honour’d if ye’ll tashte it.’

So saying, she took a pin from her shawl, and keeping it hidden between her thumb and finger, began to milk. She, however, pricked the cow slightly, which naturally made the animal move on. She went after it, and pretended to milk, but again the cow moved on, under the influence of the pin.

‘I’m very sorry, sur,’ she said, ‘but this cow won’t keep shtill. She’s a very narvous animal. Would yer honour mind jusht puttin’ yer hand on her horn? It’ll keep her shtill.’

As she made this request, her eyes looked so bewitchingly at Gaunt that he at once exclaimed:

‘Only too happy, my pretty maid.’

He placed himself awkwardly in front of the animal. Kathleen began to milk.

‘Thank yer honour,’ she said; ‘that quietens her.’

A few moments later she got the pin firmly between her fingers, and gave the cow a sharp prick; this was too much for the patient brute, for it bounded forward with a roar, knocking Gaunt down, and leaving the mark of one of its hoofs on his vest. Kathleen began to shout ‘Help, help,’ but Gaunt staggered to his feet and assured her that he was not hurt; she, however, in a seeming hysterical manner, kept calling for help, and he, not willing to be found in such a plight, tottered away and was soon out of sight.

When he had disappeared Kathleen broke into a hearty laugh. In the midst of it another figure hurriedly crossed the stile behind her, and before she could turn round, kissed her. 'Divil a bettther, divil a bettther, Kathleen!' he exclaimed; 'I was watchin' it all, and if you hadn't settled him yerself, bedad I'd have had somethin' to say to him.'

'Twas the cow that settled him, Tom.'

'Arrah dhin! good luck to the baste, I say, Kathleen!'

Then both laughed heartily at the joke. 'Sarve him right, the ould toper!' said Tom. 'Throth, if I had me way, he wouldn't be long at the masher's.' Then Tom went on to give his betrothed, for so she was, an idea of his contempt for Gaunt.

Gaunt all this time was behind the wall over which he had disappeared. He heard the derisive laughter, and saw Tom's delight. He watched him stand by while Kathleen milked the cows, and then saw him walk with her to the house, carrying the can of milk.

It was in no pleasant frame of mind that he got to Father John's—the liquor which he had taken had died away, and he felt miserably cold.

'Let me have something to drink,' he said to the priest.

'Oh certainly, certainly, my dear Gaunt, any amount,' Father John said, as he went to the cupboard and took out a bottle of whisky.

Father John was in the best of spirits; he looked at Gaunt's woeful face with a humorous sort of compassion. 'Come, Gaunt, cheer up! cheer up,' he said; 'you are not like yourself at all to-night, what's the matter with you?'

‘Nothing!’ Gaunt answered gruffly. ‘What did you send for me for?’ he asked.

‘Just to have a quiet evening, nothing more, nothing more, my boy, I felt so miserable; but the sight of your face has done me good,’ said Father John, laughingly.

‘What the devil do you see to laugh at?’ Gaunt asked savagely.

‘On, nothing, nothing; don’t snap at one so, Gaunt! everybody needn’t be so miserable as you, you know.’

‘Needn’t they? well, whether they need or not, I’ve had enough of your blarney.’

‘Now, Gaunt, what’s the use of getting into such a state of mind. Come, cheer up, and pass the bottle this way, and I’ll join you.’

Slowly Gaunt recovered his usual frame of mind, and when supper had come, he was as jovial as the burly priest himself.

At supper Father John handled his knife in a very unsteady manner, and Gaunt made several attempts to reach the salt before he succeeded; in fact, it was evident that both had visited the bottle too often during the evening. They got somewhat soberer as they continued to eat.

When supper was over Gaunt felt very sleepy, and he leaned his head against the back of his chair to gratify his inclination. Father John watched him with his small sharp eyes.

‘Of course you have heard the news, Gaunt,’ he remarked, in as careless a manner as he could assume.

‘No,’ drawled Gaunt, who was in no humour for talking. ‘What news?’

‘Darcy is coming back in a fortnight.’

'Well, what if he is? Who cares?'

'Oh, I don't suppose it matters much to you! Only I was thinking you would have to turn out when he came.'

Gaunt woke up thoroughly at this. 'Turn out!' he exclaimed; 'what do you mean?'

'Why, haven't you heard?' Father John asked, in assumed astonishment. 'He is going to be married.'

'Married!' Gaunt shouted; 'who told you?—it's a lie!' he roared, shaking his fist at the priest.

'It's no lie, Gaunt,' Father John said quietly; 'what gain would it be to me to tell you a lie?'

'Who the devil knows? You priests are always up to something or other.'

'Nonsense, nonsense, my dear Gaunt,' Father John said soothingly. 'What do either you or I care whether he is married or not?'

Gaunt rose at this, and began pacing about the room.

The priest watched him narrowly; he could see that Gaunt was struggling to calm himself. At length Gaunt sat down.

'You're right! you're right, Father John,' he said; 'what does it matter to either of us whether he is married or not?'

Father John smiled to himself at this. He pushed the bottle towards Gaunt: 'Help yourself,' he said.

Gaunt poured out some, and then sat looking into the fire.

Father John also was silent for a time. At length, breaking the silence, he asked, with an ill suppressed sneer, 'And what might it be, Gaunt, that makes Darcy's marriage so distasteful to you?'

Gaunt turned sharply round at this question. 'If you snivelling priests would mind your own business it would be better for you,' he said.

'Come now, my fine fellow, don't be so very sarcastic!' Father John said, in a sneering way, 'or else I will bring you to your senses.'

'You?'

'Yes, I; don't think that I don't know you, Gaunt.'

'Know me! What do mean, you shaven rascal?'

'Very good! very good, indeed! Well acted, Tom Darcy, alias John Gaunt! Do you think I know you now?'

Gaunt did not answer; he sank back in his chair, while Father John looked at him with a malicious grin. In a few minutes he had recovered somewhat—he was now much milder. With an innocent look, he said:

'There must be some mistake, Father John. I know nothing of Tom Darcy, whoever he may be. I wish you would explain yourself.'

'The Tom Darcy that I refer to,' said Father John, 'was the uncle of John Darcy, and if he were living at present, would come in for John Darcy's property, that is, supposing John Darcy were dead, and that he left no family. Do you understand?'

'Yes, yes; I think I do,' Gaunt replied, trying to look interested in Father John's communication.

'Well, twenty-five years ago a murder was committed in this parish,' Father John went on, at the same time keeping his eyes fixed on Gaunt, who at this part of the story was very pale. 'The murderers were never discovered.' Gaunt's face gained a bit of colour. 'A man named Michael Reece died two years ago'—Gaunt's

face paled again—‘and as I was his spiritual adviser, I attended him and gave him the rites of the Church. He told me that he and this Tom Darcy had committed the murder.’

Gaunt was trembling, but, as he felt that the priest’s eyes were on him, managed to gasp out, ‘Well, what then?’

‘Nothing more,’ said Father John sharply. ‘You’re Tom Darcy!’

Gaunt jumped up, cursing fearfully. No one knew but this miserable priest, he thought. Quick as lightning he snatched up a knife from the table, and rushed at Father John. The latter, however, was too quick for him, for he withdrew hastily into a corner, and pulling a pistol out of his pocket, levelled it at Gaunt.

‘Come on, you bloodhound,’ he cried, ‘I’m ready for you!’ Gaunt was checkmated. He looked about helplessly, then, throwing down the knife, he flung himself at the priest’s feet and begged for mercy. ‘Stand up, you fool!’ Father John said, in answer to his entreaties; ‘do you think your wretched carcase is worth anything to me?’ Encouraged by this, Gaunt arose. ‘Now, understand me,’ Father John continued, ‘you must halve your gains with me in the future—for you only give me a miserable pittance at present. And I want you to do something else—you must sign this paper. It promises to me, if ever you come into the property, a fair income. I don’t ask anything, you see, unfair; for the help I shall be able to give you will be worth the money.’

Gaunt said nothing, but took the pen which Father John offered him, and signed his name.

'Now, Gaunt,' said Father John, 'let bygones be bygones! If we are united, we can do a great deal to help each other. Sit down, and let us spend the rest of the evening in a friendly way.'

But Gaunt begged to be excused. 'He would rather not—he felt very unwell; he would be all right to-morrow.'

'Oh, very well,' said Father John. 'I'll see you to-morrow, then.'

Gaunt bade him a feeble good-night and tottered out.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### MARRIED LIFE.

'Wheresoe'er she went  
Loud voices drooped, her beauty carried peace  
Into loud Discord's heart, and had she bent  
Above a soldier from the bloody trench,  
The fleeting spirit would have left a smile  
Behind it on the face.'

A. SMITH.

DARCY was married. The news spread rapidly among the tenants on his estate, and great was the interest taken in the event. They found out by what train he was coming, and made great preparations to give him a hearty welcome, while Tom was cautioned not to let Darcy know anything of their intentions.

Gaunt went about, in a seemingly enthusiastic manner, superintending the arrangements.

The time at length had arrived, and the train came

puffing into the station when night had fallen. Grace, with a happy, wondering smile, was sitting with her hand in Darcy's, when all at once she was startled with a great glare of light, and by terrific cheering, louder than the noise of many waters. The detective was there, shouting himself hoarse with the others. Grace shuddered and pressed her husband's hand.

Darcy at once guessed the cause.

'Oh, love,' he exclaimed, 'it's all in honour of us!'

She uttered an exclamation of glad surprise.

'What a noble fellow this husband of mine is!' she thought; 'how they honour him! how they love him! how I must strive to be worthy of him!'

And then she pictured to herself the long, calm, wedded years that they should live, surrounded by grateful hearts, blessed themselves, and being a blessing to others. Alas, alas! The smile engendered of this blissful vision was on her face as the train stopped, and her husband handed her out of the carriage.

'How like a queen she looked!' they thought. The glare of the torches was on her face, and from every prominent position about the station, crowds saw her beauty, and sent up cheer after cheer, for had not a saint come to dwell among them? Darcy led her by the hand to the carriage, both bowing to the multitudes as they went. Holding open the door of the carriage stood Tom, proud and erect. The night was fine, and he had brought an open carriage.

From their elevated positions they could see the wonderful sight. Torches here, torches there, torches everywhere! and there was a triumphal arch lit up, under which they had to pass! And what was this?

They were moving, but how? A string of stalwart forms stretched away in front of their carriage, and drew it along. They were taken a round-about way through the village, where in every window, nay in every pane, were candles; and when they left the village the road was lighted with tar-barrels, placed at intervals all the way to the house through the park; and when they reached their own door, there were the servants standing a row on each side of it, while all around on the trees hung lamps of varied hues.

Then Darcy ordered the butler to give the people refreshments, and barrels of beer were brought out on the lawn, and huge rounds of beef, and scores of loaves of bread, and cheese *ad infinitum*. Lastly, a keg of whisky appeared. When the people saw this, they redoubled their enthusiasm, and cheers were called for for 'Mr. Darcy, the best landlord in Ireland!' 'Darcy, the friend of the Irish!' 'Darcy, the boy that'll settle them yet!'—this met with tremendous enthusiasm, as all understood what it meant—'Darcy, the foe of the English!' at this they began to cheer, but suddenly remembering the lady inside, the cheer died away, and the unlucky individual who started it soon wanted a new hat.

Then there were calls for Darcy, and in response to them he threw open a window and appeared. His face was flushed, and it was evident that his reception had unsettled his sober judgment.

'Fellow countrymen,' he began, when the cheering had died away, 'this is indeed a glorious night in my life! It gives me great hope in the future of our unfortunate country to see your enthusiasm. I accept it

with all my heart as a sign that the principles which I advocate are dear to you. We must not rest, my friends, till we have carried them out; till that beloved turf which you stand on is free even to the last sod; till Ireland, our glorious old country, shall hold up her head once more among the nations!' He waved his hand towards the people and retired. The applause which followed his short speech was prolonged and deafening.

While it was going on, Gaunt had dragged the detective behind a tree.

'Now,' he hissed maliciously, 'you have heard him yourself; do your duty—arrest him. Isn't that enough?'

'Tis not enough,' the detective replied, as he moved away.

When the people began to disperse, Gaunt went into the house, and saw Darcy, whose hand he grasped.

'Heaven grant you prosperity!' he exclaimed. 'Was it not a noble sight?' he continued; 'the minds of the people are thoroughly aroused! It is a hopeful, a very hopeful sign of success!'

Darcy shook his hand warmly.

'Yes, my friend,' he said, 'it was a grand sight! But come, I'll introduce you to my wife.'

They went into the drawing-room.

'Mr. Gaunt, Grace, an old friend of mine, who has been staying with me for some time. My wife, Gaunt.'

'I am happy to make your acquaintance, Mr. Gaunt,' she said. 'Any friend of my husband is a friend of mine.'

Gaunt muttered something about it being an honour for anyone to be a friend of hers.

'Your countrymen, Mr. Gaunt,' she continued, 'have

warm hearts, I see. They are very kind to a stranger like myself.'

'They are, indeed, very kind,' he said, hesitatingly. Then, after sitting for a little time, 'But you'll be tired after your journey,' he said; 'I'm happy to have made your acquaintance, madam; I'll wish you good-night.'

Gaunt felt very uncomfortable during this short conversation. He had long been unused to ladies' society, so that he was glad to get away.

There was one sore heart that night; for the glare of the lights and the noise of the shouting had reached Emerald House, where Rose Clements, with firm-set lips, and hard-drawn breath, and eyes Medusa-like, stood resolute to avenge.

Next day Darcy took Grace over the house, and brought her to the windows, from which several fine views of the surrounding country could be seen. She was lost in admiration and wonder, and threw her arms about his neck, and looked into his eyes with an unspeakable tenderness.

'My love, my love!' she murmured, 'you must have loved me to bring me to such a beautiful place!'

'Of course I did, you naughty girl,' he said, playfully.

'You do love me, don't you?' she asked again.

'Oh dear me, how often have I answered that question!' he exclaimed. 'I must distinctly refuse to gratify a woman's vanity again.'

For this answer he got his ears boxed.

But what need to tell of all their joys and innocent pleasantries? suffice it to say that a new era had begun in both their lives. They read together the thoughts of

bygone ages, climbed the hills together, and gave their thoughts to each other freely.

After a few months of halcyon enjoyments, sketching the beetling crag or ruined tower, or wandering carelessly through the woods, straying by the streamlets, their faith in each other became firm and sure.

Then they opened their eyes to their surroundings. Grace was not the one to shirk her responsibilities ; she studied all the works that she could get which bore upon the duties of her station, and Darcy studied them with her.

He saw that he had hitherto neglected many important duties, one of which was that he should make himself personally acquainted with his tenantry. He and Grace agreed that they would begin and visit each house on the estate. They were to give no notice of their intention, as they wished to see the real life of their dependents.

Accordingly one day they set out, and in the space of a few hours they had gained a valuable experience. The delight of the people at being thus honoured, as they called it, was very great.

Grace won all hearts by her thorough kindness. She spoke to the mop-headed children, who at first ran to their mother's apron and looked at her with great wondering eyes, but soon they would come and shake hands with 'the lady.'

In one house a bedridden old grandmother lay, bad-tempered and miserable. Grace went up to the bed, and placing her blessed hand upon the wrinkled forehead, spoke in such a tender way that the hardened face softened and complaints died away.

Thus she went from house to house, carrying gracious and healthful influence with her.

Darcy entered into conversation with the head of the house, if he were in, and asked him questions about his farm, his family, etc. If he were not at home, Darcy, with a pleased look, watched Grace taking captive the hearts of the household, and joined with her in the general conversation.

When they turned homewards both felt that their time had been well spent. They walked on together for some minutes in silence, pondering over their morning's work. Darcy at length broke the silence; he was thinking of his wife.

'Grace,' he said; 'you're an angel, and much too good for a fellow like me.'

But she held up her finger warningly, and with a smile, which hovered on the verge of tears, said, 'Now sir, beware! Have you considered the consequences of having an angel for your wife? She might fly away some morning, or do something equally ridiculous.' Then, seriously: 'What a grand work is before us, husband dear! What a host of things that we have seen this morning could be improved! We shall try to improve them, shall we not?' she asked, looking up into his face.

'Yes, Grace,' he answered; 'I see that there is a great deal to be done, and we shall do our best to accomplish it.'

'Once a year,' she went on, 'we shall visit all our tenants.'

'No oftener?' he exclaimed, in his new enthusiasm.

'I think not,' she replied; 'you know if we went too

often, it would appear as if we were prying too much into their affairs. Grown-up people do not like to be treated like children. Don't you think that would be often enough, just to let them see we take a personal interest in them?

'You are quite right, Grace,' he answered.

'Of course,' she continued, 'that need not keep us from assisting them in their difficulties at all times.'

Thus they walked on, each willing as the other to do all in their power to encourage and improve those dependent on them—he ardent to rush into any scheme that she suggested, she cautious lest, in trying to do good, evil might be the consequence.

In a short time after they had become acquainted with the people and their farms, they decided to endeavour to teach them how to make the best use of the ground. Darcy was to take a farm which he occupied himself, and get it farmed according to the best approved methods, for an example. Lectures in agriculture were to be given as soon as the superiority of his method of farming was shown, and prizes were to be awarded annually for the best kept farm.

This settled, they began to turn their attention to other ways of benefiting and elevating those around them. When, after a day spent in discussing and inaugurating these schemes, and in planning others, they sat together in the evenings, business being banished, and when she read to him or he to her, or when she played and sang some homely air, and at its close sat at his feet and looked up into his eyes, he felt that this was indeed the greatest earthly good.

'I used to be very unhappy in the evenings,' he said

to her one night; 'the gloomy spirits used to fly down and settle on one, but you have chased them all away; none dare enter where my little woman's face is seen.' Then she told him of her life, how doleful it used to be, and how she had to bear many indignities without appearing to notice them—how only the idea of duty kept her from desponding.

And often times they wandered back into the past, comparing it most unfavourably with their present; and looking at the future, they painted it with glowing colours of fancy. Their happiness was to grow, and their usefulness was to get greater year by year, and then, when anticipation could go no further, they sat hand in hand, and let visions which could not be expressed in words float lazily through their minds.

In the day-time they often drove for pleasure to see some local celebrated place. On such occasions Tom thought it a great honour to be allowed to sit behind his master and mistress, and he looked proud too, for his mistress' dignity had to be maintained, and by no light or unnecessary word or intimate nod to a passing acquaintance would he compromise it.

His master had introduced him to Mrs. Darcy as his tried and valued servant, and Mrs. Darcy treated him with great consideration. She made him her ambassador, as it were, to the doctor and clergymen in the neighbourhood, whenever she wanted the particulars of any distressing case, and oftentimes Tom walked by her side, carrying her bounties to the homes of want. He felt that he was highly honoured, and that he should show by his conduct that he appreciated it. Indeed, his devotion to his mistress was not shown only by

words, for once when one of the men-servants about the house mentioned her name in a light manner, Tom, after gazing at the offender for a moment in utter amazement, forthwith knocked him down.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### ON THE TRACK.

‘ Ah ! he was brightest at the noon of night.’

A. SMITH.

GAUNT was staying at Darcy’s all this time; he was seen at the dinner-table on only a few occasions, and even then he never ventured to speak more than a few words to Grace. She rarely spoke to him; in fact, she had told her husband in confidence that she did not like Gaunt, that she had tried but could not; she supposed it was very absurd of her, and she hoped her husband would forgive her. Of course his pardon for such an imaginary offence was never withheld.

Darcy, up to this, about two months after his marriage, had not attended the meetings of the agitators. Gaunt always brought him the reports of the proceedings, and explained any business to him. But now Gaunt changed his tactics. He had calculated that Darcy would begin to attend of his own accord. He had given him a certain time in which to tire of matrimony, but that time was past. Accordingly he began to talk despairingly of their prospects. Members were dropping off, he said,

funds falling low, interest in the undertaking was subsiding. Some were saying that if their leader did not care about these matters, why should they? and so on.

These arguments and hints, and others like them, had their effect on Darcy. It was a blow to his pride that anything which he had striven for should come to nothing; it was an appeal to his pride, for Gaunt took for granted that he could revive the flagging interest in the cause. So he determined to set to work once more. He would be more guarded though, he thought, and would not raise vain hopes, but strive to instil the lesson of patience; for he thought of Woolwich and what he had learned there.

And now Grace had to be told something of what he was engaged in. Accordingly, as they sat one night in their usual way, he said, 'I want you to listen to me, Grace, for a minute.'

She looked up in wonder, but seeing his grave face, she said nothing, but pressed his hand and listened.

'I have been for a long time engaged in an undertaking for the liberation of my country. Your country, England, is free: why should not mine, Ireland, be so too? There is no law of God which sanctions the slavery of nations, therefore all nations should be free. There are slaves amongst individuals, against their will, but it is their duty to be free; much more is it the duty of nations to break the chain of their bondage—to become distinct nationalities.'

He would have gone on further, for he hoped to convince her of the justice of the cause for which he strove, but she interrupted him.

‘What can I do to help you?’ she asked.

He was astonished at her question—it was an agreeable surprise.

‘My darling,’ he exclaimed, ‘what a brave spirit you are! I have to be out at night sometimes, Grace, and I thought you would be anxious if you did not know the reason.’

‘I am glad you told me,’ she said quietly, as she caressed his hand. ‘When do you want to go?’

‘To-morrow night,’ he said.

‘So soon!’ she exclaimed.

A shadow crossed her face, and he saw it.

‘Now, Grace darling,’ he said lovingly, ‘you must not be frightened; there is no danger whatever—not the least.’

She looked up and tried to smile confidently, but it was a failure—the tears would come.

‘Oh, please don’t mind me,’ she entreated; ‘it’s only my foolishness. I’ll be better soon.’

Next night came, and Grace was quite firm again. The struggle was over, the brave spirit had conquered.

‘What am I,’ she thought, ‘that I should monopolise his time? If he is engaged in a great work, I must fit myself to be his helper and companion.’

So she sent him forth strong, and armed with her faith in him and his faith in the justice of the cause.

Darcy found Gaunt at the meeting-place. With him were two strangers, whom he introduced to Darcy as visitors from Dublin. He talked to them, before the meeting began, of the state of the society, and of the progress it had made in his district. He asked about

the condition of affairs in the metropolis. They gave him very satisfactory answers.

‘Everything was flourishing,’ they said; ‘secrecy was being maintained; the train of events was running along quite smoothly, and swiftly bearing blessings to Ireland.’

Two fresh detectives had been sent down, to replace him who first came. They were sent to follow up the search more expeditiously than he had done. Gaunt, for his own ends, had told them the password for the night, and hence they were at the meeting.

When Darcy showed himself to those assembled, he had a splendid reception, which made the blood tingle in his veins. When he rose to speak, the applause was terrifically grand. In the face of it all the prudent resolutions vanished. His thoughts at Woolwich came before him for a moment, only to be scouted. ‘With such men as those,’ he thought, ‘all things are possible!’

Accordingly his speech was as fiery and treasonable as any of his former ones.

Tom was there, listening with a puzzled expression of countenance. Why his master should get so excited about equality and liberty, he could not make out; however, he supposed that it was right, as his master seemed so sure about it.

As he walked home with Darcy after the meeting, he tried to engage him in conversation on various subjects, but without much success; for Darcy was thinking—reviewing his speech. The more he thought of it, the more foolish it seemed. He inwardly cursed his own weakness in surrendering the convictions formed by the

exercise of his cool reason, to the heated applause of a set of ignorant men. In this frame of mind he reached his house.

'I must go quietly,' he thought, 'and not disturb her.' But when he had opened the door, another door inside opened, and Grace came to meet him.

'Oh, dear me, how cold you are!' she said. 'Take your coat off quickly. I have a cosy fire in the room for you!' and she playfully dragged him into the room. 'There, you scapegrace,' she said laughingly, shaking her finger at him, 'there are your slippers, and here is your supper. I fear you don't deserve it, sir, but you shall have them this once.'

'You are right, Grace,' he said, drawing her to him and kissing her, 'I don't deserve it.'

Tom was not forgotten either, for a fire burned brightly in the kitchen and his supper was warm in the oven.

Gaunt and the two detectives stayed till all the others had left the place of meeting.

'Well,' he said, with a malignant smile, 'is the proof strong enough now?'

'Yes, I fear it is,' one of the detectives, a jovial-looking fellow, replied.

'You fear!' Gaunt exclaimed. 'What do you mean by that? Don't you want to do your duty? You had better mind what you say, or you'll soon be moved out of this district. There are plenty of others who would be glad to get such a good opportunity of distinguishing themselves.'

But the detective explained that Gaunt had misunderstood him; that of course he never intended to say any

such thing ; that he was only too glad to catch Darcy ; and that he would be eternally indebted to Mr. Gaunt for the help he had given him.

With this explanation Gaunt expressed himself satisfied.

‘You have every word down ?’ he asked.

‘Every word,’ they said.

‘And you will send it off to-morrow ?’

‘To-morrow evening at the latest we shall send it.’

‘Very good—very good,’ Gaunt said, rubbing his hands. ‘We had better go now,’ he continued. ‘I’ll go with you until you get on the main road ; then you can find your way.’

Accordingly, the three went on together. They found the way with difficulty, for the night was dark. When they got on the main road, Gaunt gave them directions about their way to the village, while he went in the opposite direction towards Darcy’s.

The two detectives walked on slowly, arm in arm, for they knew each other well. They had often worked together before, for the jovial appearance of the one, and a sanctimonious look which the other had, made them formidable in their calling. The former could always ingratiate himself with the men of the world. The other could generally manage to become acquainted with those who thought themselves the salt of the earth.

‘What do you think that old chap is after, Bill ?’ asked the sanctimonious one.

‘Throth, I’ve been thinkin’ of it, and thinkin’ of it, Jack,’ replied the other, ‘and can’t git no nearer.’

‘There’s no reward offered, is there ?’

'No, it can't be that.'

'He lives at Darcy's, doesn't he, Bill?'

'He does, blast him, the ungrateful spalpeen! He lives on the best of everythin'!'

'Is there a woman in it, Bill, do you think? They are always at the bottom of these affairs. What's Darcy's wife like?'

'Now, Jack,' said Bill, 'that's enough. You haven't seen her, have you?'

'No.'

'Throth, if you had, you'd say that that ould rat av a Gaunt had nothin' to say to her. Arrah, Jack, if ye saw her! Faix, she's an angel out and out!'

'God help her, then, Bill, for there's trouble in store for her!'

'Amen, Jack, I'll say to that! And to think that it's all through that ould reprobate! Throth, he deserves a good thrashin'! and I wouldn't mind givin' it him!'

'And, bedad, I'd help you with all my heart, Bill!'

'You would?'

'Ay, throth, I would! Come along, dhin!' exclaimed Jack, as he turned back and ran along the side of the road, where the grass deadened the sound of their footsteps.

When they had gone some distance, Jack put his ear to the ground and listened. He could hear footsteps in the distance.

'This way, Bill,' he said, as he scrambled over the ditch and got into the fields.

Bill followed. They kept a good distance from the road, so that they could run without being heard. Twice they rolled together into a ditch, but they were soon up

again, and hurrying on. When they thought they had got before Gaunt, they began to descend obliquely to the road. When they got there, they listened again. They could hear him coming along. As he came nearer, he was chuckling with delight—no doubt over some pleasant thought.

‘Aha, me boy,’ said Jack under his breath, ‘ye’ll change yer chune before long!’

When he came abreast of them, they rushed out, and laid hold of him, and for five minutes he was knocked about like a tennis-ball. He shouted ‘Murder!’ and ‘Help!’ but they took no notice. With a few parting kicks and a few slaps in the face, they let him go; and then crossing the ditch again, they disappeared.

This was indeed a surprise for Gaunt. He was not much hurt, but he had had a severe shaking, and he smarted in several places, and felt sore in others. ‘Who could have done it?’ he asked himself several times. They were not robbers, that was certain. They did not mean to murder him, that was equally certain. If they had only spoken, he might have had some clue; but they did not utter a word. At length, after much thought, he suddenly stopped in his walk. ‘I have it,’ he said. Yes, he had fully come to the conclusion that Tom had done it, or got it done. He called to mind the scene in the field with Kathleen. ‘I’ll pay you back, see if I don’t, my fine fellow!’ he hissed.

Filled with revengeful thoughts, he limped to the house, and let himself in by a side door, the key of which he kept. He never spoke of the incident to anyone. A slight lameness which he had he attributed to a fall, but all the time it lasted he firmly believed that Tom was secretly laughing at him.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## RUN TO BAY.

'Before me runs a road of toil,  
With my grave cut across.'

A. SMITH.

THE weeks rolled by, and Darcy's married life flowed on, unbroken by any fitful gust. Once only had Grace seemed troubled, and then he found her crying in a room upstairs. He rushed to her, and found her standing before the picture he had bought from the Hon. Henry Morton.

'Do you know that, Grace?' he asked.

'Know it!' she sobbed. 'It used to hang in our dear old house. It is a portrait of my mother when a girl.'

'How glad I am, Grace, that I bought it!' he exclaimed.

Then he told her how it came into his possession. It was a sad memento for her. It brought back her dead mother and the breaking up of her home. The picture was taken downstairs to a more honourable place, where the mother could always watch over the child.

He had not spoken again at the meetings of the society in his district. One thing he had determined on, and that was that when he spoke again he would not be led away by applause from saying some things which he knew would be unpalatable to his hearers. Such were the facts that for a dozen years, or more, at their rate of progress, they could not have the shadow of a chance of making a successful resistance to their

oppressors; that each man was to work on steadily at his business, as if no changes were contemplated, and that each one should train himself in habits of sobriety and rectitude, to be of any use in their country when it should be redeemed.

These, and many other things he intended to tell them, but, alas, they never heard them! For one night as Darcy and Grace sat before the fire, he leaning back in an easy-chair, and she reading to him of moving accidents by flood and field, they were startled by seeing the door flung open, and by seeing Tom standing before them breathless. Signs of distress were on his face, as he looked from one to the other.

‘What is the matter, Tom?’ Darcy asked, starting up from his chair.

‘What is it, Tom?’ Grace asked, coming near to him.

He looked at her.

‘Ochone! ochone!’ he cried: ‘oh, that I iver lived to see this day!’

Overcome by emotion, he sank into a chair and sobbed bitterly.

‘Tom,’ Darcy said, ‘if it’s anything of importance you have to tell, you are losing a great deal of time.’

This had a good effect on Tom.

‘Thrue for you, thrue for you!’ he exclaimed, as he wiped his eyes. ‘Well, masther dear!’ he continued, sobbing occasionally, ‘as I was comin’ from the town a man muffled up shtopped me. “Who are you shtopped?” says I. “Are you Tom, Misther Darcy’s sarvant?” said he. “Throth I am, yer honour,” said I. With that he came nearer to me, and says he: “Ochone! ochone! that iver I saw the day!”’

'Come, come, Tom,' Darcy said encouragingly, 'let me know what it is.'

'He said,' Tom went on, 'that I was to tell you from him that it was all planned out, that you was to be arrested between twelve and wan of the mornin' for high trayson, and that you might like to know that a vessel was sailin' from the harbour about two.'

This was startling news. Grace rushed to Darcy, and hid her face on his breast. He put his arms round her.

'Let them come!' he said firmly. 'Call in the tenantry, Tom, as many as you can find, and bring all the guns from the gamekeepers. Barricade the windows and doors! They'll find who they have to deal with!'

'Oh, no, no!' Grace entreated, as Tom was going away. 'It would be useless, indeed it would. Call him back, call him back!'

Tom was called back. He stood hesitatingly in the doorway.

'Forgive me, forgive me,' Grace said. 'I have been very weak; I will be strong now!—Indeed I will, dearest!'

She wiped her eyes, and stood pale and erect.

Darcy was by this time in deep thought. With an effort he had calmed himself to look the danger in the face.

'Tom,' he said, after he had thought for a few moments, 'take Firefly with you, and ride down to Mr. Abbot's as fast as you possibly can, and tell him to come up as quickly as he can.'

Mr. Abbot was Darcy's agent. Tom in a couple of minutes was heard galloping away to execute his master's order.

Darcy and Grace looked into each other's hopeless faces.

'Oh, Grace, that it should come to this!' he groaned. 'I cannot leave you, darling! They shall tear me in pieces first.'

And he kissed her again and again passionately.

'Oh, darling, darling!' she sobbed, 'the time is passing rapidly; let us think what can be done! They can't arrest you for treason, can they?'

'They can, Grace, they can,' he moaned. 'And that means years of banishment—most likely penal servitude! Oh, what a fool I have been!'

'Oh, don't, don't despair!' she exclaimed. 'You must fly, darling; wherever you are, I will join you. Tom will take care of me till we meet again.'

He seized her hand, and kissed it. He saw that that was the only way out of the difficulty.

'You are right, Grace,' he said, 'it is the only way.'

Their prospects brightened considerably.

'It will only be a change of place, Grace, after all,' he said, 'and we can make our home in any country where we are together.'

'Yes, dearest,' she replied; 'it won't make any difference. We can be as happy in another country as we are here.'

They heard as they spoke the galloping of horses. It was Tom returned with Mr. Abbot. The latter came in hurriedly; he was white and breathless.

'For God's sake, sir, is this true that Tom has been telling me?' he asked.

His anxiety made them relapse into gloom.

'I fear it is,' Darcy replied.

'What a fool you have been, sir!' Mr. Abbot thundered on. 'A fool!—I repeat it—to get yourself into such a trouble for a pack of curs!'

'Mr. Abbot,' said Grace, with dignity, 'if that is all the assistance you can give my husband in this emergency, we only waste time.'

This cooled Mr. Abbot.

'I humbly beg your pardon, madam,' he said. 'I acknowledge that I was hasty.' He now spoke quietly. 'Can you let me know the particulars?' he asked. 'I could not gather them from Tom.'

Darcy told him all he knew. Mr. Abbot thought over the matter for a minute or two.

'You must go by that boat,' he said. 'It is better than penal servitude.'

Tom had now come, and was standing with a gloomy face at the doorway.

'Come in, Tom, and lock the door,' said Darcy.

Tom did so. Darcy went to a writing-desk, and took out a form, which he rapidly filled up. It was a document consigning all his property to his wife during her lifetime, and after that to her descendants, if any. Grace went to him and saw what he was doing.

'Oh, husband,' she entreated, 'you are losing valuable time. Don't mind that. Mr. Abbot, won't you help me to persuade him?'

'What is it, madam?' Mr. Abbot asked.

'He is wasting the precious moments over some settlement or other,' she replied, 'that can never be of any use.'

'He ought to have done it before, madam,' he said; 'but as he has not, it is the best thing he can do now.'

She appealed again to Darcy, but he was resolute. He read the document over when he finished, and signed it. Mr. Abbot and Tom also signed as witnesses.

‘Just see, Tom,’ said Darcy, ‘if Mr. Gaunt is upstairs. I want to see him.’

‘Och, bad luck to him!’ Tom exclaimed, ‘he’s not upstairs. I saw him goin’ out this mornin’, and I’ll go bail he’s got a finger in the pie.’

‘Oh, nonsense, Tom,’ Darcy said.

‘What is the time now?’ Grace asked nervously.

Mr. Abbot pulled out his watch.

‘Half-past ten,’ he replied. ‘We have no time to lose, sir,’ he said, addressing Darcy. ‘Tom and I will go and get the horses ready.’

He went out, and Darcy and his wife were left alone. Darcy’s courage had almost gone. He could have stayed and faced them, and fought to the death; but to go away thus required courage of a different order. His wife’s face was utterly colourless, and her eyes were moist with tears; yet she cheered him by her words, and infused new hope into his heart. She spoke of their future—how she would go to him, and how quickly the time would pass—how soon they would be united again. Yes; there she stood, ringing her death-knell with the sublime heroism of a spotless soul!

And then they heard the horses brought to the door, and he, after one long, last, pitiful adieu, rushed from the room. When he gained the door, he jumped on the nearest horse and galloped off. Mr. Abbot and Tom hurriedly mounted and followed him. When they had gone about a mile, they found him waiting for them.

‘What is the best thing to do, Mr. Abbot?’ he asked.

Mr. Abbot suggested that they should ride on together for another mile or two, and then that Darcy could make the best of his way on foot to the vessel. That would leave Tom and him plenty of time to get back and to have the horses cleaned, so as to hinder the police getting a clue to the direction he took. Darcy assented to this, and they rode on in silence.

When they had come to a wood, which bordered the road, Darcy pulled up.

'My friends,' he said, with emotion, 'I must leave you here. I know my way from this perfectly, and it will be safer for me to go alone. To you two I leave the task of watching over my wife; help her in every way you can.'

Mr. Abbot seized his hand.

'You may depend on me,' he said.

As they spoke, Tom emptied a bag which he had brought with him. It contained the working clothes of one of the gardeners at the house. He brought them to Darcy.

'Put these on,' he said, in a dreamy sort of way.

'What are they?' Darcy asked.

'Billy Johnson's clothes,' was Tom's curt reply.

Darcy saw at once the advantage of a disguise, so he quickly put them on over his own.

'Good-bye, Tom,' said Darcy, holding out his hand to Tom.

But Tom did not respond.

'What's the matter with you, Tom?' Darcy asked in astonishment.

'I've been thinkin',' Tom replied, 'that maybe that

fellah that tould me that you war to be arrested wasn't spakin' the thruth.'

'What do you mean, Tom?' Mr. Abbot exclaimed.

'Well, don't you see,' Tom explained, 'he may want to get the masther on board that vessil for some rayson or other.'

This was a new view of the case, and Darcy was evidently perplexed with it, for he walked hurriedly backwards and forwards. Mr. Abbot was silent. There was very little time to decide.

'What do you say to this?' Tom asked. 'You know that the mishkawn can be seen from all the counthry round, and the house can be seen from the mishkawn. If Mr. Abbot goes to the house, and hangs a lamp out av the top windy when the pilice come, I'll be on the mishkawn and set fire to a turf-shtack. But if they don't come, you'd betther not go to the ship.'

'You've got a head worth two of ours!' Darcy exclaimed, a ray of hope dawning amid the darkness. 'Off you go, Tom. It will take you all your time to get there.'

Tom needed no prompting. In a moment he was in the saddle, and in another he was galloping away.

'You must go now, my friend,' Darcy said to Mr. Abbot. 'I'll be quite safe.'

Mr. Abbot had taken the precaution of bringing a considerable sum of money with him, which he now gave to Darcy.

'I sincerely hope, sir, that Tom's idea may turn out to be the correct one. In any case, I trust that this affair will blow over, and that you can come back again in a short time.'

‘I sincerely hope so, my friend. Good-bye!’

‘Good-bye! good-bye!’

A hearty clinging shake of the hand was given, and Darcy set his face towards the sea.

His heart was breaking, and he had great difficulty in restraining himself from turning back. It was all so sudden, but, alas! only too true. He steeled his heart, and went on.

Mr. Abbot rode quickly back, leading the other horse. On the way he asked himself whether he ought to tell Mrs. Darcy of Tom’s conjecture, and he came to the conclusion that it would be better to do so. He entered the house, and saw the door of the drawing-room partly open. He pushed it quietly back and looked in. Grace had thrown herself on a sofa, and was lying with her face buried in her hands. He would not disturb her, so he closed the door gently and went into another room.

He had not been there many minutes, before he heard a rushing noise in the hall. He looked out quickly, and saw a white dress disappearing through the doorway. He took a hurried look into the drawing-room. Mrs. Darcy was not there. Bare-headed, he rushed out into the night, and followed the sound of footsteps down the avenue. Although an old man, he ran swiftly, and soon overtook the fugitive. He laid his hand upon her arm as gently as he could.

‘For God’s sake, madam, what do you mean? Where are you going?’

‘Let me go!’ she exclaimed; ‘if you are a man, let me go! I must go to him! I will go to him! Oh, let me go, Mr. Abbot!’

‘Oh! madam—madam!’ he said, ‘be advised! What you are doing is nothing short of madness. Oh, think how you lessen his chance of escape! You know you can join him again, if he succeeds in getting away. Come, madam, come back with me. Forgive an old man, Mrs. Darcy, but think of your unborn child. Do, madam, come back!’

She burst into tears, and allowed herself to be led back. He took her into the drawing-room, and made her lie down on the sofa; then he closed the door quietly and kept watch and ward outside.

Half a mile from the town, hidden in a thicket, Darcy eagerly watched. He loved the darkness just then, and fervently he prayed that no flame on the mountain-top would light up the gloom.

When twelve o’clock had struck, Mr. Abbot heard a heavy tramp. He went quickly into the drawing-room to tell Mrs. Darcy. She had heard it too, and was standing pale and erect, with firmly-pressed lips. Seeing her, he hurried back, and snatching up the lamp, which he had prepared, ran upstairs and waved it out of the window. In a few seconds a light appeared in the distance, growing larger and larger, till at length it burned with fierce splendour. Darcy saw it with a heavy heart, and stretching his numbed limbs, he hurried towards the town.

The house was surrounded, and the officer in charge of the police force went in. In a courteous and gentlemanly manner, he stated his business, and begged Mrs. Darcy’s pardon for disturbing her. He then, with three of his subalterns, searched the house—of course, without any result. The servants stood around in helpless

terror. Then the stables and all the outbuildings were searched, but Darcy was not to be found. Grace bore up bravely during the ordeal. She would be worthy of her husband, she thought, and would not let any womanly weakness be visible—and well she acted her part. With firm pressed lips and blanched cheek, she stood watching the search.

After the play, however, when she was left to commune with her own heart, her life showed before her as a blank—a dreary solitary waste, over which she had to travel. A terrible sense of loneliness and desolation oppressed her through the night hours. She watered her couch with her tears. But towards the morning, after wrestling through weary hours, she seemed to see looking down upon her, with a tender, pitying look, the face of Him who bare our griefs and carried our sorrows. She looked up into His patient, suffering eyes, a great comfort came into her heart, and she fell into a peaceful sleep.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

GRACE.

‘Hungering still,  
For the beloved voice, and ears, and eyes,  
And hungering all in vain.’

L. MORRIS.

THE news soon spread that Darcy had escaped, and that a reward was offered for his capture. It astonished the majority of the people, who had never heard of Darcy having anything to do with the conspiracy.

Messages of condolence were showered on Grace from all quarters. Sir Robert ventured to visit her, and in his kind, fatherly way did her much good. He offered her the shelter of his house, but she reminded him that she was not desolate, and she told him that as long as her husband's house was left to her, she would stay there.

Poor Mr. Mayhew wrote in an agony of grief, begging of her to leave that wretched country, and that he would provide for her. Mrs. Mayhew, miserable and unhappy though surrounded by luxury, was inwardly gratified at the news, and as if Providence had specially brought the event about in order to fulfil her cynical prediction, she imparted to her neighbours the information that she had always said no good would come of such a match.

Darcy had just time before the ship sailed to write a hurried note to Grace. This she read over and over again. It was the first letter she had ever received from him. How she treasured it! It contained only a few words:

‘My darling!’ it said, ‘we sail in a quarter of an hour for Havanna, in the West Indies. The thought of you, Grace, gives me hope and courage. Be brave, my darling, and put your trust in God. May He guard you with His strong arm! To Him I commit you, my darling, my darling!’

It was like his spirit going in and out with her, having this torn, soiled piece of paper next her heart.

She found out how long it would take for a sailing vessel to get to Cuba, and then strove, oh, so hard! to

be patient. She began to be very busy—no pining idleness for her! She visited the homes of sickness and poverty, and it often did her heart good to listen to the pitiable tales of others, to hear of the blighted lives and ruined homes; for they made her fate seem trivial, and on such occasions her heartfelt sympathy was freely imparted to the sufferers.

Tom was her almoner to those in distress. He was indeed a comfort to her; always ready, watching her movements, unobtrusive, executing her wishes almost as soon as they were uttered. He protected her from whining hypocrites, who are always ready in such cases to take advantage of well-meant generosity; he also guarded her from those of a more respectable class, who, from curiosity more than anything else, paid a visit to Mrs. Darcy. His tact in getting rid of such people was wonderful.

One face was often seen riding up to the house, that of Sir Robert. Tom was always glad to see him, for he had noticed that his visits did his mistress good. Sir Robert invariably apologised for troubling Mrs. Darcy, alleging at one time a sudden impulse that he had to come and see her; at other times he laid the blame on Mr. Mayhew.

‘I don’t know what the man can be thinking of,’ he said one day, with a smile; ‘two or three times a-week I have letters from him, more like those of a madman than anything else, conjuring me to write to him, and tell him all about you, and scolding me for not paying attention enough to you! I do believe you will have him over here, some day, soliciting the place of butler in your house, so that he can wait on you himself.’

Sir Robert often took the opportunity of scolding Grace for doing so much ; a rebuke she listened to with a smile, but never acted on. He had suggested to her that she might write to Darcy, and direct the letters to the post-office, Havanna, as the mail-boat would arrive there sooner than the sailing-vessel. She had been so grateful to him for this suggestion, calling him all sorts of endearing names, that he had ever since been racking his brains for another suggestion which would give her equal pleasure.

Mr. Abbot looked after the business affairs of the house. He was too practical a man to be able to express his sympathy in a sympathetic manner. He felt this himself, and was silent. He had intimated to Gaunt that his presence in the house was no longer desirable ; the latter accordingly had to leave it, much against his will.

His dwelling-place afterwards was known to few, but he was always present at the meetings, and conducted the business of the society as usual, while the authorities complacently flattered themselves that everything was disorganised on account of Darcy's flight.

The slow weeks trailed their length along, and Tom noticed with pain his mistress's face grow paler and paler, for though there was time for a letter to arrive from Darcy, yet none had come.

At last her hopes were gratified, for a week later, a letter was handed to her, bearing the Havanna post-mark. With feverish haste and throbbing heart, she opened it. Oh, joy ! he was safe, the passage had been stormy, and the ship in consequence was delayed.

His letter was brimful of hope and courage. He was

going to the United States, he wrote, and would soon have a home ready for her. He would start immediately so as to lose no time.

He wondered every day what she was doing, he said. As for himself, at such a critical point in his life, he was thankful that he had her to work for, and to lead him on to higher and better things.

When she had read it and re-read it, she sat down to write a long answer. She told him of the great kindness she had received from all about her; how Sir Robert came to see her and cheer her so often, how he thought that Mr. Mayhew would apply for the situation of butler in the house, and whether Darcy would have him without references, and what salary ought she to offer him; how Tom was so attentive and helpful; how a lady near, named Miss Clements, had created a great sensation in the county by voluntarily going into the convent of St. Bridget.

‘Poor thing!’ Grace wrote; ‘I wonder what has driven her to adopt such a useless life! I wish I could see her: I would try to show her that, though life may be dark for a time, yet if we are only patient a light will be sure to shine out amid the darkness, something to beckon us and encourage us to buffet the waves of selfishness, and idleness and despair, till at length we stand on firm ground. That something you are to me, dear, dear husband!’

And then she told him of others who had been arrested in different parts of the country, and how thankful she was that he had escaped.

‘But oh! I do long to be near you, darling!’ she went on. ‘The days pass quickly enough, but when

the evening comes, and I look at your vacant chair, it is almost too much for me. You could scarcely believe that I am so silly ; but often I go and kneel before it, just as I used to do when you were here, and imagine that you are in it still, and talk to you, and tell you everything that is on my mind. You must not think I am troubling myself because I tell you this, for I flatter myself, sir, that I am very brave, so do not try to take away such a comfortable idea from me.

But this strain of forced mirth did not last long, for further on in her letter she again broke out :

‘Oh, darling, darling ! what shall I do without you when our child is born ? The doctor tells me that I must not fret, and I do try to keep my mind quiet, oh, so hard ! But I fear it is no use trying, so long as you are away ! Oh ! how I wish that all these troubles were over, so that you could come back again to me ; but I suppose that cannot be. I shall try to keep myself strong, dear husband, so that I can soon go to you.’

So she went on, filling page after page with doubts, and hopes, and fears.

After waiting a few more weeks Darcy’s answer to her letter came ; he had safely arrived in the States, and was looking for a suitable place for their home.

After this their correspondence with each other by letter was frequent ; every post brought her one, every post carried one to him.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## PARTED.

'My passion sweeping through me, left me dry—  
Left me with the palsied heart, and  
Left me with the jaundiced eye.'

A. TENNYSON.

ONE day Darcy got a letter from Ireland in a strange handwriting. It was from the doctor. A child had been born to him—a daughter. Mrs. Darcy would have to be kept quiet for some time ; but the doctor had no doubt but that she would soon be strong again. The baby was doing well. The letter was a short one—a mere official announcement.

Darcy could scarcely restrain himself from taking the first boat to Ireland ; but a consideration for the welfare of his wife and child hindered him. If he were arrested, what would become of them ?

After waiting long and anxiously, he got a letter in his wife's dear hand. The writing showed that the writer was very weak, but the contents would lead to the opposite conclusion, for it was full of motherly pride ; and though a great longing to see her child in its father's arms was expressed, yet there was no fear. Her hope was strong, now, that they would soon be united again.

'As soon as baby is fit for the voyage I shall start,' she wrote.

The months went slowly by, and the child each day grew stronger, but the mother walked about with difficulty ; she grew paler and thinner, yet she insisted on visiting some poor people who lived near her. As she

listened to their sorrows, or looked upon their pain, a pity almost divine shone from her eyes.

After a time Tom had to wheel her about, and several times she chided him gently, when she found him with moist eyes looking sadly at her. Darcy all this time was kept in ignorance, for she would not tell him how ill she was—indeed, she did not know herself. It was only for a time, she thought, that weak and languid feeling; she would get stronger soon, and why should she trouble him? He needed all the encouragement she could give him.

At length she got so weak that she could not hold her child, and the nurse had to put the little one's lips to her each evening. One day an accident happened which gave a great shock to her. Her child, through the nurse's negligence, got very badly burnt on the arm. Of course, the doctor was sent for with all speed, and he did his best to thoroughly heal it; but he feared the mark would be there for life.

Grace had just strength to write and tell Darcy of the occurrence, for she felt that she could not keep up much longer, as the cries of her darling had cut her to the heart. She told him that she felt her end was near.

'Our child will be in my stead, dear husband,' she wrote, 'when I am watching over you both from the heavens. I want to ask a request from you, and that is, that you call her Grace, after me. Many names have been suggested to me; some wanted me to call her Rose, others Mary, and others Emily; but I should like you to think of me whenever you call her to your side. You will call her Grace, won't you, dear, dear husband?'

Her letter throughout was written in a tone of firm conviction that she was bidding him a final farewell ; there was no doubt, no uncertainty about it : the words were firm, wonderfully firm—she might have been writing about another, and not herself.

He read the first part of her letter with great indignation, for the sufferings of his child made him for the time unjust ; he blamed everyone, not excepting Grace herself. But when he read further on, his indignation was turned into amazement. ‘What folly, what hallucination, what madness, has come over her!’ he exclaimed. He could not, he would not believe what Grace told him.

He tried to reply to her letter several times, but each time he tore up what he had written. What should he say ? What could he do ? He could not decide. In a state of anxiety and uncertainty, he wandered about.

His uncertainty was soon set at rest, for by the next mail he got a letter from Ireland. He opened it wildly, and read it. His wife was dead—her gentle spirit was no more ; she had died with his name upon her lips.

He looked at the letter fixedly and astoundedly for a few minutes, then, clenching his hands, and setting his teeth firmly, shrieked, ‘It’s a lie ! A damned lie ! Who dare say she is dead ?’ In another minute he was seen rushing wildly from the hotel, down the street among the crowd, shrieking, ‘It’s a lie ! It’s a lie !’

They caught him and carried him to a hospital. The doctors pronounced his disease brain fever. Letters were found which showed who he was, and his friends in Ireland were soon acquainted with the pitiable news.

Meanwhile they buried Grace. No funeral like hers

had been seen in the locality before. Sir Robert, and Mr. Mayhew led the way ; then followed the gentry of the county ; then the farmers on Darcy's property, to a man, and the greater part of their families ; the labourers on the farms gathered in hundreds ; the beggars in their rags brought up the rear. The graveyard was not sufficient to hold them all, and the people might be seen kneeling on the ground in hundreds outside the walls. And when the last word had been spoken, and the last sod laid down, the vast multitude turned away in silence, feeling that 'the soul that climbed hour by hour the silver shining stair,' had at length reached the summit ; the steps by which she went they all knew, and who knows how many on that day resolved to follow her ? Gaunt got drunk on that day, lest it might make any impression on him.

Sir Robert had Darcy's child brought to his house, and he also took Tom into his service. The house was left with an old woman to look after it, till Darcy was fit to let Mr. Abbot know what was to be done with it.

For six weeks Darcy tossed about and raved in bed ; once his life was despaired of, but he rallied again. At length he returned to consciousness, and to the bleak cruel world which had treated him so hardly. He now improved rapidly, but a great change could be seen in his face ; his illness, and the cause of it, had left a woe-begone, haggard, half-scowling expression behind.

One day the doctors gave him permission to read the letters which had been accumulating during his illness. They were chiefly written by friends, sympathising with him in his sorrow : he tore them up and burnt them. 'All hypocrisy !' he sneered ; 'windy nonsense ! How

they love to have someone to pity!' His heart was very sore, and it seemed to make his temper bitter.

All kindness was now thrown away on him. It could not bring her back, then of what use was it? He did not want it. In this frame of mind he remained, and he did not reply to any letter of sympathy. He looked upon his dead wife almost as one who had left him of her own accord. 'What did she go pining away like that for?' he asked himself. 'Why did she not tell me?—and I would have brought her here at once, and made her well!' From accusing her, he generally turned to accusing the Almighty. 'Why should I be treated like that?' he questioned. 'What have I done?' One day, as he impiously reasoned thus with himself, he pulled out Grace's last letter from his pocket and began to read it. It vexed him to see the resigned, confident way in which she wrote of her death. 'She ought not to have given in so easily!' he thought. As he read on, he came to the part where she mentioned what name she would like her child to be called. 'Some wanted me to call her Rose.' He stopped short. He had not noticed that name when he read it before. 'Rose! Rose!' he muttered; 'that's why I'm punished! Indeed! Many a man has done worse, and still is happy. Why should I be singled out?' So saying, he tore the letter up in a rage.

At times he thought of his little daughter. It was strange, but as yet he had felt no great interest in her since his wife's death; he looked upon the care of her more as a business duty than anything higher. 'She's all right at present, anyhow,' he said to himself. 'What could I do with her?'

He wrote to Mr. Abbot, giving him directions about his property ; the tone of the letter astonished the latter not a little. He had often asked in vain for Darcy's permission to compel certain of the tenantry to pay their rents. He knew well that they could pay it without inconveniencing themselves, and that they were simply cheating their landlord. Now the letter said, ' If any tenants are in arrears, make them pay at once, or give the land to others. Why should I feed paupers ? ' Mr. Abbot aroused the indignation of the populace against himself by carrying out Darcy's directions to the letter.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

### A MYSTERY AND ITS EXPLANATION.

' How long, O Lord ! how long ? '

SIR ROBERT was in great distress one morning, a few months after he had taken charge of Darcy's child, for she could not be found anywhere. The nurse was certain, and would have gone down on her knees to swear, if necessary, that the child was in its bed when she herself went. Search was made in every likely place, but to no purpose. When the search was at its height, some one remarked that he had not seen Tom that morning ; others were asked if they had seen him, but all answered ' No.'

Here was another mystery : Tom was missing ! The child also was missing ! It was a study for inventive brains to link both together, to supply a motive for their disappearance.

Sir Robert was in dismay ; he had always trusted Tom implicitly, and could it be that he had taken away the child ? Why should he take her away ? Sir Robert could give no answer.

Mr. Abbot was told all about the strange circumstance, and he thought deeply over it. Tom had signed the document which transferred Darcy's property to his wife and daughter. The wife was dead, and the daughter would be the fortunate possessor of it all. Was Tom trying to turn this fact to advantage in any way ? It was a very plausible theory to suppose that he was. One thing, however, was opposed to it, and that was that Mr. Abbot had possession of the document. Yet Tom, without it, might be content to wait for Darcy's death, when his daughter would come into possession with or without a will. How Tom could be benefited by that Mr. Abbot could not make out ; yet he suspected him of having some hidden motive, and he felt that it was no other than Tom who had taken away the child.

All their doubts, however, were soon set at rest, for Sir Robert in a few days got a letter from Liverpool, purporting to come from Tom. There was no doubt about its genuineness ; everybody said it was his writing, a rather uneducated style, certainly, with faulty spelling and diction, but still his.

He began his letter by asking Sir Robert's pardon for going away in such a sudden manner, but excused himself by saying that Mr. Darcy had written to him privately, telling him to take his daughter to him as quietly as he could, without letting anyone know of it.

'Mr. Darcy said,' the letter went on, 'that he would write to Sir Robert and explain everything to him !'

Tom had got a nurse for the child, and it would be quite comfortable during the voyage; they were starting in a few hours after the letter was written. This took a great weight off Sir Robert's mind; he was, however, very much hurt to think that Darcy would not take him into his confidence, and he wrote to that gentleman by the first post, telling him plainly what he thought of his conduct in the matter.

One heart was sore beyond the others. Oh so sore, and so heavy! It was Kathleen's. No more the mirthful glance of innocence and joy shall shoot from her dark eyes, for they are weighed down with tears. No more the lark shall hear her song rising with its own to heaven's gate, or the cows lift their heads to listen, for the spirit of heaviness is on her inmost soul.

One stormy night after this event, when the wonder had subsided, and when the few who thought of Tom thought of him as being on the sea, a man muffled up so that only his eyes peeped out from his clothing entered the village of Carrybane. The rain was coming down, blown furiously along by the wind; the street was dark, save where here and there a lamp in a shop-window threw a feeble light on the darkness, showing the puddles on the road and the footpaths.

In the shops a few idlers, sitting on the counters, cracked coarse jokes with the shopmen: no other sign of life was visible. The traveller evidently knew the village well. He selected the left-hand side of the street, and walked slowly down it. Now and then he stopped at certain houses, and listened for a few minutes at the doors. The sound of a flute came from

one, the crying of children from another, the voice of a scold, railing at the weather, and everything in general, from a third. In many silence reigned, and it was only after listening patiently for a considerable time that he discovered that there were people inside. Sometimes the low sweet lullaby of a mother over her child's cradle gave him the cue; sometimes a word thrown from husband to wife across the hearth. At each door he knocked gently, and when the owner of the house came to open it, the stranger whispered a few words in his ear and passed on. When the man's wife or children came to answer the knock, he always asked to see the man himself; invariably he was asked to come in and sit down, but he always refused.

When he had got to the end of the left-hand side of the street he came up the other, acting in a similar manner. In one of the houses on this side of the street, when he got near the door, he heard the scraping of a fiddle, and a shuffling of feet, with now and then a shout of triumph as a dancer forced his partner to give up before himself.

It was strange to notice the various effects this man's message produced on those to whom he whispered it. It made Peter Bradley, the blacksmith—a very undemonstrative man—lavish such an amount of endearment and affection on his wife, that the good woman was most agreeably astonished; but he as suddenly left her side, and sat with his elbows on his knees, and his head between his hands, looking steadfastly into the fire. The man with the scolding wife turned back into his house, and gained his wife's esteem for ever afterwards by thrashing her soundly. The joyfulness of the

men at the dance collapsed like a football when pricked, and they left their fair partners to take care of themselves, while the majority of them got together in knots and stared gloomily at each other. The minority strove hard to keep up an appearance of joviality, but two of them were so ungallant as to fall out about some trifle or other, and to proceed at once to blows; the women tried to separate them, but the men took no notice of the row.

In a short time the public-houses were doing a good business—a sudden mania seemed to have seized the male population of the village to try which of them could get drunk first.

Later on in the evening they left the village, and went in the direction of the mountain which overlooked it. The greater part of them walked wonderfully steadily, considering the amount of drink they must have taken. It did not seem somehow to have its usual effect that night. Cold and wet, they plodded on up the mountain road to the cave of Kaida. Men armed were at its entrance, and all along to the interior. Here those who had just come disguised themselves, some by tying their coats round their heads, and making two holes to see through; others by blacking their faces; while others exerted their ingenuity in various ways towards the same end. Some half dozen used no disguise.

In the centre of the cave a large stone had been placed; over it a rope hung by a hook from the roof; at the end of the rope was a noose; two long poles lay on the ground beside the stone. A few candles stuck here and there on the sides of the cave threw a feeble glare over the scene.

After they had been there for about a quarter of an hour, waiting in the cold, with teeth chattering, and with bitter thoughts in their minds, produced by their position, Gaunt appeared on the natural platform at the opposite side of the cave.

The light of the candles shone on his face now and again, and showed him pale and worn, with bloodshot eyes and a generally dissipated appearance. He was not in good temper.

‘Have you administered the oaths?’ he asked of one of his minions who stood below the platform.

‘No, captain, not yet,’ was the reply.

‘Then do it at once! Let us lose no time over this miserable business.’

The oaths were administered, each man swearing that he would never under any circumstances mention what he was engaged in that night to any human being whatever, and that if he did, he prayed that all the evils that could fall on anyone in this world and the next might fall on him.

Gaunt was watching them as the oaths were taken. One man whose turn came near the last hesitated. It was Peter Bradley. Gaunt immediately noticed it.

‘Take care what you are about, my fine fellow,’ he shouted, ‘or you’ll soon find yourself in a hot corner!’

Thus stimulated, the unfortunate blacksmith went through the ordeal.

‘Is every one sworn?’ Gaunt asked.

‘Everyone, captain,’ came the reply.

‘Then bring in the traitor!’

All eyes were turned towards the entrance where they expected to see the traitor; for as yet not more than

half-a-dozen knew who he was. They waited in silence for some minutes; then steps were heard coming along the side passage. Presently a man armed with a revolver appeared; after him walked the prisoner, with his hands tied behind him; two other men armed brought up the rear.

The step of the prisoner was firm. He looked around when he entered the cave, and saw the preparations which had been made to receive him with an unmoved countenance, only a half-pitiful, scornful smile was upon his lips. They lifted him on to the rock, and put the noose round his neck; he turned his head, and the light shone upon his face. It was Tom! 'Tom!' many a one there would have exclaimed if he dared. Peter Bradley, the blacksmith, was almost crying out to bewail his fate, but he saw Gaunt's eye upon him, and he cowered behind the others.

'Fellow countrymen,' Gaunt began, 'you see here to-night, in this miserable wretch, one who has dared to disobey the commands of our society. He has dared to break the oath which he took, when he was granted the privileges of joining us. (Cries of 'Shame!' from those in Gaunt's pay.) You may well exclaim "shame," my friends! Shame on the man who would not free his country from the galling yoke of bondage under which every Irishman groans at the present moment. Shame on the man who would not strike down tyranny whenever he got the chance! Eternal perdition ought to be the lot of anyone who is too great a coward to strike a blow for liberty! (Cheers from the greater part of those present.) There is a tyrant in this part of the country, my friends; you all know him well. As soon as his

master's back was turned, he began to oppress the poor, to turn them out of their houses and homes—think of that—those whose fathers and grandfathers lived there before them! Make it your own case. What would you say if this boisterous night your houses were surrounded by policemen, and if you saw your wives and children turned out into the street to die of cold and starvation? What would you say? Ah! my friends, that's not the proper question. What would you *do*? Is there a man here who has a drop of Irishman's blood in his heart who wouldn't find out the author of all this, and pay him out as he deserves? (Cries of "No, no," and cheers.)

After going on in this strain for some time, until he had incited their inflammable natures, he pointed to Tom.

'Here stands the coward,' he hissed, 'who refused to carry out the judgment! who was afraid to strike down the tyrant! who thought that the wives and children of our brothers were not worth standing up for. Here he stands! A coward! A traitor! (Cries, "Death to the traitor.") You have spoken, brave brothers, like men that you are,' Gaunt went on. 'Our brotherhood has decreed that he who will not put a tyrant out of the world when it falls to his lot to do so is not fit to live.'

Then, with a fine show of generosity, he said, 'But our society does not punish any man unjustly; I am authorised here, before you all, to offer him a free pardon, if he will carry out what he took his solemn oath to perform when he joined us.' (Applause.)

'You heard what I said,' Gaunt shouted to Tom. Now, here, before your brothers, give your answer.'

'How long will you give me to answer you?' Tom inquired.

'Oh, as long as ever you like,' Gaunt replied.

'All roight, me boy!' Tom exclaimed, for in truth he could not realise his position.

'Fellow counthrymin,' he began, 'or, maybe, I ought to say fellow townsmen, for although yer all done up in the mosht outlandish shtyle, yit I can put my finger on wan or two. Throth, dhin, there you are, Shawn Brani-gan! sure enough! yer nose ud bethray you anywhere. The nixht time you come to a job av this soort lave it at home.'

'You'd betther shut yer mouth, Tommeen!' Shawn responded, 'and answer the captin's question at wanst.'

Tom did not notice this retort, for he was looking at a small fidgety man, who wore a pair of light tweed trousers.

'Arrah, bad luck to you, Jimmy Flaherty!' he exclaimed. 'Who gave yer highness lave to wear me besht Sunday throwers, that I sint to you to be mindid? Be jabers! yer moighty free with what doesn't belong to you! Throth, you may well be ashamed to show yer face!' he added, as the tailor retreated behind those who stood near him.

Gaunt now interfered. 'I must remind you,' he said, in his sneering way, 'that you were not allowed this time in order that you should have an opportunity of insulting your countrymen; you have done that well enough already, by taking the part of a tyrant! I'll give you a few minutes longer, so you had better let us hear what you have to say!'

Tom took no notice of this, for his attention was now

occupied in looking at a big powerful man who leaned against the side of the cave. After regarding him for a few seconds, Tom spoke with a voice filled with sorrow :

‘And you, Pether Bradley ! Who’d have thought to see you here ? Och, Pether, it’s a bad return you give for all the kindness that was shown to you whin you war shtretched on yer back for sivin long wakes ! Throth, many’s the day I carried the basket to yer bedside, when she, who’s now a blessid saint in heaven, wint to see you ! She’s lookin’ down on you to-night, and cryin’ the eyes out av her head to see yer ingratitude !’ The tears rolled down Tom’s face, and he sobbed aloud.

‘Och, Tom, jewel !’ Peter Bradley exclaimed, in a voice of agony, ‘they made me do it ; but, be jabers ! they’ll not do it again. I’ll shtand to you, me boy !’ and pulling a knife from his pocket, he opened it, and made a rush to Tom in order to cut the rope which tied his hands.

Gaunt at once saw his intention. ‘Hold him ! fall on him ! stop him !’ he shouted.

Immediately ten or twelve men threw themselves on him. He knocked three of them down in a twinkling but it was no use. In the midst of the scene of confusion he was overpowered, and tied, then thrown aside, battered, bleeding, and helpless.

‘Every man to the poles !’ Gaunt shouted ; he had a revolver in his hand. ‘Any coward that hesitates will have a bullet through his miserable carcass ;’ and he fired a shot over their heads.

In an instant the poles were taken off the ground, and placed against the rock on which Tom stood.

'Now, you traitor !' Gaunt shouted to him, 'I ask you for the last time if you will rid the world of that tyrant, Abbot ?'

'No, Gaunt ; I won't.'

'One, two, three !' Gaunt shouted, and the rock was pushed away, and Tom, brave Tom, noble Tom was no more !

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

### RETRIBUTION.

'Thou fool !'

PETER BRADLEY was the only man whose hand was not on one of the poles, but Gaunt had no intention to let him off so easily.

'That's the way our brotherhood deals with traitors !' he exclaimed. 'Fellow countrymen. The world must be relieved of this monster. That coward that hangs there would not do it, someone else must. Lots will be cast now, and the man who will have the honour of ridding Ireland of one of the oppressors will also have the satisfaction of knowing that he is saving the lives of hundreds of his fellow countrymen, that he is keeping their wives and children from starvation, and that he is vindicating the honour and dignity of the society to which we belong.' At this there was a forced cheer.

There was a bag ready, from which the lots had to be drawn. It was strange, but no one seemed anxious to have the honour of sending a tyrant out of the world !

All had drawn but Peter Bradley. Gaunt volunteered

to draw for him, and how lucky it was they all thought that he should have the work to do. Gaunt gave orders that he should be untied.

‘He cannot help his friend much now,’ he sneered.

They had dragged the blacksmith into a corner, and left him there; they now untied him. He was scarcely able to stand, and was pale and trembling, for the heroic excitement had passed away, leaving him weak as a child.

They brought him before Gaunt, who told him the result of the lottery. He listened without the slightest show of interest. Gaunt was vexed at this.

‘Take heed what you are about, my fine fellow,’ he said, ‘or it may be the worse for you! You have got this thing to do, and it must be done soon. By this day week let us have a satisfactory account from you! You may go now, but remember, no power on earth can save you from our hands if you follow the example of your friend there, and turn traitor!’

Peter Bradley walked slowly away. As he passed Tom’s lifeless body, he felt the truth of Gaunt’s last remark. Almost heart-broken, he went out into the rain, puzzling his bewildered brain to find some loophole of escape from his difficulty. Alas! there was none. On either hand the fate of his friend met him; if he refused to carry out the commands of the society he must follow Tom. But Tom had no wife and children to leave behind to bear the scowls of neighbours! He could not bear the thought of leaving them to be branded as the family of a renegade! If he carried out the command of the society he would put to death a man who had never injured him. But then he might

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not be found out; and even if he were, his name would be handed down to his children as that of a martyr, and his family be respected, and not allowed to want. These thoughts, in a vague sort of way, floated in his mind as he went home.

When Gaunt had seen that the body was safely buried, he turned his steps towards a cabin in the mountain, where he at present lived.

'That's one out of the way, anyhow,' he said to himself; 'and when this Abbot goes, there will only be that puny child left. As for Darcy, he is mad, safe enough in an American asylum. Won't I enjoy myself in Paris or London for all this bother! But then there's that cursed Father John! He'll want a nice penny, I dare say! May he live to get it!' and he chuckled to himself at the thought.

Within the week the country rang with the cry of 'Another outrage in Ireland!' The newspapers made capital out of it. It supplied an easy subject for a leading article, and, consequently, was used in this way by scores of editors.

'As Mr. Abbot,' the account ran, 'was driving from town yesterday evening, he was fired at from behind a hedge, the shot whizzed past his head, fortunately without doing any damage. With conspicuous bravery, he and the car-driver followed the would-be assassin, and after a hard run, caught him. He turned out to be a notorious character, a blacksmith in the neighbourhood. There is no doubt but the outrage comes under the usual head of "agrarian."'

Peter Bradley had scarcely been a prisoner for a week before he asked to see a magistrate privately. He had an

interview with two of them, when, in language broken with sobs, he told them the true story of how he was in the position in which they saw him. Higher authorities were communicated with, and the result was that, after a time, Peter Bradley and his family found a comfortable home in New Zealand.

In the meantime a reward was offered to anyone who would give such information as would lead to the arrest of Gaunt. The reward was very tempting to the poor people who knew of his whereabouts, yet, who dare give the information? One man durst. In the middle of the day he walked leisurely along the road which led to the stipendiary magistrate's house, stopping now and then to talk to the farmers as he went along. He was going to get whatever information he could, he told them.

When he reached the house, the men-servants took off their hats to him, and the women-servants curtsied, for Father John was well known to them all. He told one servant in confidence that he had come to ask the stipendiary not to be hard on a certain old woman who had stolen some fowls, and whose trial was coming on.

The servant 'God blessed' his reverence, as she showed the way to the room where her master was. 'You're always on the side of the oppressed,' she said.

After speaking to the magistrate for some time about the ordinary topics of conversation, Father John leaned towards him, and asked whether he could have a few minutes' private conversation with him?

The magistrate led the way to a private room, and when the door was locked, Father John opened up the purpose of his visit.

He heard with the greatest grief and dismay, he said, that an attempt had been made on the life of such an excellent man as Mr. Abbott. He feared that the people were getting away from the control of their natural guardians, the priests, who always set their face against any violence, and were following a band of agitators, who had no principle to guide them but their own aggrandisement.

The stipendiary assented to this. That was the case, he thought.

Father John went on discussing, in his own way, the state of the country, and the cause of it. At length, however, he returned to the subject of the attempted assassination by asking, as it were casually, whether any information which might be given that would lead to the arrest of Gaunt would be considered secret.

The stipendiary struck his fist on the table.

‘Any man,’ he said, ‘giving me such information as shall give me the opportunity of arresting this Gaunt will receive the reward offered as soon as the arrest is made, and his name will never be told by me to a second person.’

Father John thought this satisfactory. He took a swift look at his companion, as if to see whether he spoke truly or not. Then he said :

‘I am in a position to give you the information you desire.’

The magistrate did not seem as much surprised as Father John thought he would be at this intelligence. His experience in his office, indeed, made it difficult for him to be surprised at anything.

'Just wait a minute,' was all he said, 'until I get my pen and ink.'

'No,' said the priest, 'no pens and ink for me! You can easily remember what I tell you, without going to all that trouble.'

'But you may have some statement to make,' the magistrate suggested.

'I have no statement to make, but merely to tell you where you can find Gaunt.'

He then began to explain how he got the information.

'A man,' he said, 'some time ago came to confession. He told me that Gaunt came to his house every day to have something to eat; that he came disguised as a beggarman from his hiding-place, and went back again to it at night. I was very much troubled,' the worthy priest went on, 'to find myself unwillingly made the confidant of this man, for he had no need to tell me of it at all; but I suppose his conscience was not easy. This was a heavy load for me to bear, to have this knowledge about a man whom the authorities wanted. I couldn't sleep for many a night, thinking of it. At last I thought I would ask the opinion of my superiors upon it, and I wrote, laying before one of them an imaginary case similar to the one I am talking about. He wrote back at once, saying that every assistance must be given to the authorities. So here I am, to get this burden relieved at last!'

When Father John had got thus far he scanned the magistrate's face, but could not find out from it whether he was believed or not. He hesitated for a few moments.

'Well?' his companion asked, 'and where shall we find him?'

'You'll keep your word if I tell you?' the priest asked.

'Undoubtedly!' was the reply.

'To-morrow,' Father John went on, 'about two o'clock, Gaunt will come down from the mountain to Micky Fanin's house. He will have a creel on his back, and be dressed like a beggar.'

'That will do. I'll see to the rest,' the stipendiary said. 'If the arrest is made you shall have the money, sir, and I dare say that will take a load off your mind.'

When he had thus spoken, he opened the door, and stood holding the handle of it.

Father John got up, and held out his hand to bid good-bye; but the magistrate would not see it. With a sarcastic bow he ushered the informer out.

Father John had not found the sympathy he expected; but what of that!—he would soon be in possession of the reward offered by the Government, and that would be some solace.

Next day two policemen, apparently unarmed, were seen on the mountain road near Micky Fanin's house. They seemed to be out for a holiday, such pranks did they play. At one time helping a labourer to turn a piece of stiff ground; at another getting the 'gossoons' to run races with the donkeys that carried the turf. Then they went into the cabins and courted the 'purty' girls. One of them was in the act of stealing a kiss from a dark-haired, hard-handed beauty, when he heard the low whistle of his companion outside. Much to

her surprise and disappointment he left his task unfinished and hurried out.

Both officers then watched, from behind a low wall, a man coming slowly down the side of the mountain. He carried a creel on his back in a very awkward sort of way, and his clothes were not in the best repair. Now and again they could see him looking sharply over his shoulder, as if dreading some enemy behind him. Nearer and nearer he came. When he had got within about three hundred yards of them, both policemen rose and walked quietly towards him. Suddenly he saw them and stood still, but presently resumed his walk in as indifferent a manner as he could assume. However, when he had gone a few yards a panic seemed to seize him, for, throwing down his creel, he ran away with a rapidity scarcely conceivable.

The policemen gave chase. The men who were at work in the fields, and the people out of the cabins all watched the pursuit. There was Gaunt running up the hill like a madman ! Now he stumbled ! Now he was up again ! He gradually gained ground, and it was evident that the policemen could not run much longer. They struggled on, though.

There was a high wall built of loose stones which bounded the mountain before Gaunt ; but he knew it. He made for a certain place where three stones stuck out and formed steps by which he could gain the top. Now he gained one of the steps. Now the second. Then hastily he loosened the stones about the first step. Now he gained the third step, and loosened the stones about the second. Now he gained the top itself, and pulled out the third step, and disappeared on the other

side. The police came up panting. One of them mounted the first step hastily, when lo! the step came out, and he fell backward, the stones rolling over him. His companion quickly pulled him out of the *débris*, and then, through the gap, reached the other side. He gave a look back, only to see that his colleague was disabled. No matter, he must do it himself, he thought.

But where was Gaunt? He was nowhere to be seen! The policeman looked hither and thither, wasting valuable time, but could not hit the track. At length, having gone higher up the mountain, he saw Gaunt a long way below him—the cunning old fox had doubled back! His pursuer took one look more to satisfy himself that it was he. There was no doubt about it; he could see him staggering on, as if he wanted to gain a farmhouse which lay before him.

The few minutes' delay had given the officer breath, and now he started off in pursuit. Every minute saw him gaining on Gaunt; the latter redoubled his exertions, but it was easily seen that a constitution enfeebled by vice was a frail thing to rest on in such a time of need. The policeman still gained on him, but Gaunt was now near the farmhouse; in a few minutes he disappeared behind it.

'Fellow-countrymen,' he shouted to the farm-labourers, 'will you see your leader hunted to death like this? Will you stand by me if I wait here for that bull-dog?' But the labourers only looked stupidly and helplessly at each other. He had no time to waste with them. 'You cursed cowards,' he shouted, as he started off again, 'if ever I get the chance I'll pay ye off for this!'

He had scarcely left the farmyard, when the policeman entered it in full chase. 'Where is he? where is he?' he asked hurriedly, 'which way did he go?'

They pointed out the way, and he continued the pursuit.

Gaunt looked back, and saw that his course had been shown. 'The curs!' he hissed through his teeth. 'Blast them!' he exclaimed, as he found his strength giving way.

His legs tottered under him, and he rolled over on the ground. He could hear the policeman's tramp in the next field. He staggered up to his feet, however, and gained the wall. Too late! With a shout of triumph his pursuer was nearing him.

A dogged look came over Gaunt's pallid face as he placed his back against the wall, and pulling out a revolver, shouted:

'Come on, you Castle bloodhound, I'll settle you!'

And on the Castle bloodhound came.

'Another step,' Gaunt shouted, 'and I'll send you to your master the——'

Before he could finish the sentence his pursuer was upon him. There was a struggle, and the sound of cursing and the report of firearms, and Gaunt fell, killed by his own hand.

He was buried with the burial of a dog.

Father John waited eagerly for a few days for some sign of his money, but he heard nothing of it. At length he made bold to call on the magistrate about the matter.

'Our agreement was, I think,' said the magistrate, in his cold formal way, 'that you should have the money as soon as the man was arrested. Is that so?'

‘That was our bargain, most certainly,’ Father John asserted, as he rubbed his hands.

‘I am glad you agree with me, sir,’ the magistrate went on, ‘for in point of fact he was never arrested, and therefore I refuse to pay the money.’

Father John was dumbfounded ; with a heavy heart he took the shortest way to his house. Arrived there, he took a bottle of whisky out of the cupboard, and drank deeply of it, then he threw himself into an arm-chair, and with his head bowed on his breast, sat motionless for some time.

At length, jumping up, he shook his clenched hand above his head. ‘All is not lost !’ he exclaimed ; ‘this child is in my power, and if I can get her riches for the convent there’s nothing to stand between me and a bishopric !’

He grew jovial with this thought, and taking his long clay pipe from the chimney-piece, he filled it, and as the clouds of smoke went curling towards the ceiling, he sat looking into the fire, and thinking out his plans for the future.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### A FRIEND IN NEED.

‘One shadow that throws  
Its bleak shade, alas !  
O’er our joys and our woes.’

T. MOORE.

WHEN Darcy got the letter, which Sir Robert in his wrath had sent him, he at once suspected that something was wrong. The letter implied that he had

given directions to Tom to bring his daughter to him secretly; but of course that was not the case. However, he determined to wait and see if Tom arrived, for it was possible that his faithful servant might have had good reasons for acting as he was supposed to have done.

For some weeks it was a common sight to see a man wandering about the docks of New York, whenever a vessel from Liverpool was expected, and scanning eagerly the faces of the passengers, and questioning the captain of each vessel as it arrived. It was Darcy. But his watchings and questionings were all in vain, for no one answering to the description of Tom had come by the boats. Darcy had engaged men to keep watch at the other principal ports, but with no satisfactory result.

Hope began to sicken, and the determination of despair took its place. He had letters from his agent, but they gave no clue. Some hellish plot was on foot, he had no doubt, to deprive him of his child. He determined to go back and spend his life, if need be, in searching for her.

All questions of prudence were put on one side, for what was life now to him? The gods, or the fates, or whatever the powers be that rule our destinies, he thought, had been very hard on him. He even went the length of accusing them of vindictiveness; but now they had done their worst, and he looked them defiantly in the face, and asked them, with a bitter smile, what more they could do?

Hatred of the higher powers invariably leads to dislike of mankind; and so it was with him: he looked

upon them all as weak, miserable, puny things, forgetting, at the same time, that he also was a man.

One thing, however, he determined to do, and that was to find his daughter. Not that life would be much more worth living if he got possession of her, for she appeared to him as something visionary—some property which he knew belonged to him, but which he had never seen. He would seek her out, he thought, if only from mere spite to those who were plotting against him, just to let them see that he could not be conquered. He would tear the mask off their cowardly faces, even if the next moment he were arrested and sent to work out his sentence among felons.

With this spirit of unreason, determination, and despair, a good deal of caution mingled in spite of himself. This led him to alter the determination which he had at first come to, which was to go back in one of the ordinary steamers in full view of the world, and to make no secret of it; then, let them take him into custody in England, if they wished—it would give him an opportunity of letting his grievance be known. Instead of doing this, he made for a port where he knew that ships from the town near which he had lived in Ireland called; they were engaged in the timber trade, and he could prudently cross in one of them.

When he reached it he went to the quay, and walked along it, scanning the vessels as he went on. He had not gone far when he saw in the stern of a three-masted sailing ship, 'The *Arethusa*, Brigo.' This was what he wanted.

He immediately went on board, and asked to see the

captain. He wanted to be taken as a passenger to Ireland, he said.

The captain doubted whether his request could be granted ; but he referred him to the owner, who happened just then to be in the cabin, and who was making the voyage with him.

Darcy went at once to the cabin. Mr. Cairns, the owner, was writing when he entered ; he looked up quickly, and on seeing Darcy, jumped off his chair and advanced towards him, but stopped suddenly.

‘I beg your pardon,’ he said, ‘I thought you were a gentleman I knew ; but now that I think of it, he was ever so much younger than you.’

‘I want you to give me a passage in your vessel to Ireland,’ Darcy said, not noticing Mr. Cairns’s apology.

‘A passage to Ireland!’ Mr. Cairns exclaimed ; ‘you must have made a mistake—we do not take passengers.’

‘I made no mistake, sir,’ Darcy said ; ‘I know you are the owner of the ship, and that it is engaged in the timber trade between this and Brigo ; and I want to know if you will give me a passage across. That is plain enough.’

Mr. Cairns was looking intently at Darcy, and the more he looked, the more certain he was that he knew the man before him.

‘What is your name?’ he asked.

‘My name!’ Darcy exclaimed ; ‘what’s that got to do with the matter ? But I have no need to be ashamed of my name. It is John Darcy.’

Scarcely had he uttered these words when the ship-

owner sprang forward, and taking Darcy's hands in his, shook them heartily.

'Darcy!' he exclaimed, 'noble Darcy! Take every man and ship I have, if you wish; they are all at your service. Your name, sir,' he went on with emotion, 'is a word that every child knows by this time! Every one of them can tell how you suffered for your country.'

'That's all very well, sir,' Darcy said, with a bitter, mournful smile; 'it is true that I have suffered for my country, and the more fool I was to do it! See how they treat me! No sooner is my back turned than my child is kidnapped.'

'Your child kidnapped!' Mr. Cairns exclaimed, as he stared at Darcy with unfeigned astonishment.

'Yes, sir! It seems new to you.'

'Kidnapped!' Mr. Cairns repeated. 'We heard that your servant had taken the child to you by your orders.'

'That was a lie, sir,' Darcy answered; 'and if my countrymen had any regard for me, they wouldn't have allowed themselves to be humbugged into believing that.'

'If it were only known,' Mr. Cairns said, as if speaking to himself, as he struck his fist violently on the table, 'if it were only known that Darcy's child had been kidnapped, there is not a house in Ireland but would be searched by this time. Come with me,' he continued, 'I'll put on extra hands, so that we can start in the morning; and if I leave you till you have found your child my name isn't Cairns, that's all!'

This show of genuine feeling did Darcy good. Here

was a man who had something to risk, and nothing to gain, going to great inconvenience for him.

‘Mr. Cairns,’ he said, in a tone of voice quite unusual with him of late, ‘I accept with pleasure and thankfulness your offer.’

‘That’s right,’ Mr. Cairns said, interrupting him; ‘we can settle everything else afterwards. Stay here, while I give the captain orders to engage more labourers,’ and he hurried out.

Next morning the good ship *Arethusa* spread her white wings to favouring breezes, and sweeping out majestically to the sea, entered on her homeward voyage.

On the passage Darcy now and again was in a sociable mood, and sometimes sat up talking to Mr. Cairns late into the night. They had remarkably fine weather for the journey; oftentimes during it Darcy felt as if he should wish it to continue for ever. This gliding on and on, with a great peace all around and above, soothed him, so that for hours he would sit watching the waves chase each other, with his mind at ease and his soul in a delicious trance. At other times, when he thought of his life, his errors, his happiness, and his misery, no Saul ever needed the sweet strains of David’s music more than he did.

Often a dark voice in his ear whispered :

‘Why should you have all the misery and trouble? Who will repay you for enduring it all? Is there not rest there, down there in the depths—rest and eternal calm?’

But on such occasions he turned away with disgust, for his was a spirit which would fight to the last, and

would never succumb to the waves, till, with his strength exhausted, they sucked him down perforce beneath their crushing weight.

After some difficulty, Mr. Cairns had persuaded him to form some plan of action by which he should gain his object when he got to Ireland. Darcy seemed so utterly careless of himself, that it took a great deal of repeated argument to make him see how valuable his life was to his child. He could not quite realise that he had a child. He once had a wife, he knew, and she, alas ! was dead ; then what was there to live for ? Into this unreasonable frame of mind his discussions often led him.

Mr. Cairns wished him to land from the ship, before it got to port, and then to stay at the cottage of a herdsman up on the mountain, who looked after a farm of Mr. Cairns's. Here he could remain in safety, unsuspected, and direct the inquiries which he wished to make.

Darcy as yet had not said whether he would follow the advice which his friend urged on him, and now they were nearing the shores of Ireland. In a few hours the captain told him the mountains would be in view, if the weather were favourable.

How eagerly Darcy watched to catch the first glimpse of his beloved hills ! His soul stirred in him, as does that of the youth who returns to his home from his first entrance into the world, when he sees the well-known landmarks which formerly bounded his world.

The mountain tops, as they rose up one by one in awful majesty, seemed to claim kindred with him ; and when at length a lesser height arose, whose form he knew, he clutched his friend, who stood by.

‘Is not that Slieve Dharra?’ he asked, feverishly.

Mr. Cairns was astonished at his vehemence, but answered quietly in the affirmative.

‘That’s where my house is, is it not?’ he asked, with increasing vehemence. ‘There, under that hill, among the oak trees! My wife is there, is she not?—waiting for me!’

‘My poor friend,’ Mr. Cairns said, with emotion, ‘I beg of you to be calm! God help you! Sit down, sit down!’ and he pushed him gently on to a seat.

The tones of his friend’s voice overcame Darcy: it opened the floodgates of his soul, and he sobbed aloud.

It was now towards evening. The shadows crept round the foot of the hills, leaving their high tops bright with the setting sun.

Mr. Cairns had arranged with the captain that they were to anchor outside of the harbour that night. They had a good excuse for so doing, for the tide was not high enough to take the vessel up to the quay.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE PAST.

‘Darkest of all Decembers  
Ever my soul has known,  
Sitting here by the embers,  
Stunned and helpless, alone!’

T. B. ALDRICH.

WHEN night had fairly fallen, Mr. Cairns and Darcy were rowed to the land. They afterwards made their

way up the mountain to the herdsman's cottage, for Darcy had by this time so thoroughly recognised his friend's devotion to him, that he left all the management of affairs in his hands. When they had reached the cottage Darcy was very much exhausted with fatigue, for, in truth, he was but a relic of him who, so short a time before, was distinguished for his physical powers.

This cottage, besides being used by Mr. Cairns's herdsman, was often used by himself as a shooting lodge, so that part of it was kept for his use, whenever he wished to go there, and was comfortably furnished. Hence he had thought of it as a suitable place for Darcy to stay at.

Mr. Cairns knocked at the door. It was opened by a round-faced, comfortable-looking woman.

'Oh, holy Mother av God!' she exclaimed, when she saw her master. 'Sure, yer honor, they niver tould me you war comin!' and she went on with a strain of apologies and excuses, wonderful to listen to. Her husband put his pipe on the hob, and came forward to back up his better-half by his looks, for not a word spake he. They evidently thought that they had been found guilty of some gross negligence.

Mr. Cairns was amused at their embarrassment.

'Hush, Mrs. Molloy,' he said, 'don't talk so loud; or you'll waken the child. There! see, it stirs in the cradle already!'

Mrs. Molloy, seeing that her offence was pardoned, at hearing this ran to the cradle and began rocking it gently, as she hummed an original lullaby.

'I'm going to leave this gentleman with you both,' Mr. Cairns said; 'you must take good care of him,' he

continued, with a smile, 'and treat him well. Send Micky down to me in the morning, Mrs. Molloy, and I'll send up some provisions. And now I want to say a word to you both,' said Mr. Cairns, in a confidential manner; 'no one must know that this gentleman is here. He is a friend of mine, and wants to keep quiet for a time, so I trust in you both to keep the secret.'

'I have every confidence in Mr. and Mrs. Molloy,' Darcy answered.

'Throth dhin it's a proud day for me to have sich a gintleman to look afther!' said Mrs. Molloy, who was the spokesman. 'Micky,' she said, addressing her husband, 'bring down the feather bed antil we air it for the gintleman. Sure it's tired and wayry he looks, God help him!'

'I must go now, Mrs. Molloy,' Mr. Cairns said. 'I know I can trust you to make my friend comfortable.'

'Throth you can!' she replied.

'Good-night, then, Mrs. Molloy.'

'Good-night, kindly, sur!' she said.

Darcy walked a short distance with his friend.

'I'll come up to-morrow,' the latter said, 'and talk matters over with you. You can trust me not to lose any more time than is necessary before we begin our search. In the meantime you will be safe. They are a worthy couple, and as true as steel. Keep up your heart, my friend; there are brighter days in store for you, you may depend on it! After the storm comes the sunshine. But I must be off and reach the boat before we lose the next tide.'

Darcy seized his hand.

'How can I ever repay you?' he exclaimed.

'Oh, nonsense,' Mr. Cairns said, with a laugh. 'I want no payment; keep your heart up—that's all!'

Another shake of the hand, and he was gone.

Darcy turned back into the house, where Mrs. Molloy had drawn a chair to the fire for him, and had the kettle boiling ready to make him a cup of tea or some punch, whichever he preferred. He chose the former, and in a very short time she had it ready for him.

'There, asthore!' she said; 'take that, it'll do yer heart good!'

While he was following her advice, she busied herself in getting his room ready. A fire was quickly lighted in it, and everything set in order.

When Darcy had finished his tea, the good woman made him sit by the roaring fire while she pulled his boots off. As she did so, she found that his feet were very cold.

'Oh, holy mother av God, Micky!' she exclaimed, 'if his honour's feet arn't as cowld as shtones! Hould dhim to the fire, yer honour, or they'll be the death av you! Micky, asthore, give me the jar that's behint the dish on the dhresser.'

Micky seemed to be a very obedient husband, and did at once as she requested. The jar was heated and filled with hot water to keep his honour's feet warm in bed.

Thanks to Mrs. Molloy's precautions and care, Darcy thought that he had never slept better in his life.

He awoke late in the morning with a lighter heart than he had known for some time. The glorious sunlight streamed into his room. He arose quickly, and dressed himself. On leaving the room he found the house deserted by its master and mistress. The doo

was open, and a host of hens were picking up food which had been scattered on the floor ; in the cradle in the corner a child slept. Darcy went outside, where a collie dog lay stretched out in the sunshine. It rose, and, without previous introduction, pushed its nose into his hand, and went with him over the fields to where Mrs. Molloy was feeding her calves.

She begged Darcy's pardon for not having his breakfast ready ; but she had sent Micky, she said, to bring the provisions her master promised to send, and she was expecting him every minute. She could get him a cup of tea in the meanwhile, however, and for this purpose she walked back with him towards the house, now and again turning to beat off the calves, which kept bumping their heads against the cans which she carried.

There was a stone seat at the gable of the house, and on this Darcy sat while his breakfast was being got ready, and viewed the landscape beneath him. Where he sat was about a thousand feet above the sea level. There, at the foot of the mountain, right beneath him, was an arm of the sea which ran up for several miles into the land. A boat here and there moved placidly over its surface. Beyond this piece of sea stretched a range of hills, which bounded his view in that direction. To his right, round the hill on which he was, lay the ocean. He could just see its white rim from where he sat. Some miles to his left the tops of the houses in the town appeared. Another arm of the sea ran up to it behind the mountain. Between the town and the range of hills opposite to him lay a comparatively open tract of country, thickly dotted over with farmhouses,

whose white walls were especially prominent in the landscape. Plantations of various trees here and there gave colouring to the scene.

His eyes wandered over the view again and again. He knew it all. Every house, every hill, every tree almost! And there behind that hill, which looked as if a few minutes would bring him to it, lay his home—what had been his home rather. Could it be possible that everything was the same, and he changed? Why cannot he call Tom and take Grace for a drive this lovely morning? And hark! the joyous cry of the hounds comes up from below! Where can they be? Ay, there they are! How the red dots speed along! Where's Tom? Where's Firefly? What was he thinking about not to be in readiness for such a run?

Mrs. Molloy's hand was placed on his shoulder.

'Yer honour's breakfast is ready,' she said; 'and Mr. Cairns sent word that he'll come up to-night.'

Darcy looked at her with astonished eyes; then suddenly, with a sigh, he remembered his position.

'I'll be in, in a few minutes!' he said, and Mrs. Molloy left him.

He clenched his fists and bit his lips as that glorious sound drove up from the valley once more. Soon the sounds died away, and he fixed his eyes on a low hill.

'Yes, that is the graveyard! There she lies!' he thought. 'The pure and gentle one, who shed such a joy into my life! There she lies, buried by strangers.'

He was delirious, they told him, while she was being buried. He had never heard, in fact, he had never asked, any particulars about it. She was dead, and that was enough for him! But how he longed to know! Did

they bury her as she deserved ? he wondered. Was the good that she had done acknowledged ? Thinking of these things, he sat there unmindful of everything around.

Mrs. Molloy again placed her hand upon his shoulder.

‘Sure yer honour’s breakfast ’ll be sp’ilt intirely !’ she exclaimed.

‘What graveyard is that on the hillside ?’ he asked.

He wished to bring her round gradually to talk of the funeral.

‘That graveyard, is it ?’ she said. ‘Sure that’s Ballysare graveyard, and a moighty lonely wan it is too ! Throth I’d not live near it for anythin’ ! And that’s Ballysare church jusht away beyant it, and up there to yer right is Carrywan chapel, where Father John, that’s known all the country over, reads mass ivery blessed Sunday ! And that house where you see the shmcke risin’ up amongst the threes is where Sir Robert Grant lives, and throth, if there’s a dacent gintleman in ould Ireland, he’s wan. And that house that you can jusht see there near the weeshe round hill, is Imerald House.’

‘Mrs. Molloy,’ said Darcy, somewhat sharply, ‘if my breakfast is ready, you had better let me have it.’

Mrs. Molloy was insulted. She walked in before him as stately as possible, and waited on him at his breakfast with the greatest dignity.

Darcy did not take any notice of her temper, for her incidental mention of Emerald House had produced a train of thought in his mind which overshadowed all minor matters. When he had finished his breakfast in silence, he asked her : ‘At what time did Mr. Cairns

say he would come up ?' But she quickly showed him that she could not forget so suddenly. She did not reply to this question, but addressed her husband, who was leaning over the fire smoking.

'Micky !' she said, in her grandest tones, 'perhaps you'd be able to give this gentleman the information he's askin' ?' Having so said, she at once left the house.

Micky was a shy, reserved creature, and Darcy had great trouble to get him to answer his question. He found out, however, that Mr. Cairns expected to be able to see him about three p.m.

Mrs. Molloy was watching for her master, and when she saw him get off his car at the foot of the hill, and begin to walk up, she went to meet him.

Mr. Cairns knew instantly by her face that something had ruffled her temper, and with a half smile, he asked, 'Well, Mrs. Molloy, what's the matter now ?'

'Throth, dhin, you may well ashk me what's the matther !' she replied. 'I'm not goin' to be ordered about by any wan, I don't care a thrawneen who it is, if it was the priesht himself !'

'Who has been ordering you about, Mrs. Molloy ?'

'Och indeed ! Musha, bad luck to him ! After I'd done all I could for him, he turns and ordhers me as if I war a dog, to get his breakfasht for him !'

'Now, Mrs. Molloy,' said her master, 'I know you are a decent, sensible woman, and that your heart would be sorry for anyone in the position of the gentleman that's staying with you. He has a great many troubles, Mrs. Molloy, more than I hope you or I shall ever see. So you must not mind him, Mrs. Molloy ; he does not mean to insult you.'

Before Mr. Cairns had talked to her long in this strain the good woman was in tears.

‘Och the crathure!’ she sobbed; ‘to think that his heart was brakin’ all the time! Musha, bad luck to me pride!’ When she got to the house she begged his honour’s pardon for being uncivil to him, and she explained that, though her name was now Molloy, her own name was O’Hara, ‘and didn’t Father John himself,’ she continued, ‘tell me that me family was the ouldest in the world, and that me ancisthers war wance Kings av Ireland, so that it’s no wundher me pride gits the betther of me sometimes.’

Mrs. Molloy’s feelings being soothed, Mr. Cairns and Darcy retired to talk over the matter which most concerned the latter.

As they discussed the various means which might be employed to trace the lost child, Mr. Cairns had great difficulty in restraining Darcy’s unreasoning and impetuous resolutions. It took him a long time, by calm, patient, and reiterated reasoning, to impress his friend with the conviction that the greatest caution was necessary to bring the matter to a successful issue.

‘You might, as you say,’ he explained to Darcy, ‘succeed in rousing the country by your appearance in public, so that no one dare keep your child. Yet what good would that be, when you yourself would infallibly be arrested and separated from her?—perhaps for ever.’

‘They dare not do it, tyrants as they are!’ Darcy had replied.

‘They dare not do it! There is no use in talking like that, my friend,’ Mr. Cairns urged. ‘They would do it, and that’s enough. Who is to hinder them?’

The violence of a mob might save you for a short time, but eventually you would have to surrender!’

Finally they agreed that advertisements should be put in the papers, offering a reward for any information which would lead to the recovery of the child. Mr. Cairns was to communicate with Darcy as soon as he got any clue to her whereabouts.

Having made these arrangements, Mr. Cairns took his leave. He promised before he went to send up some books and a few luxuries, which would help to make his friend’s time pass as pleasantly as it was possible for it to do under the circumstances.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### IMPULSE.

‘ Could I but win thee for an hour from off that starry shore,  
The hunger of my soul were stilled, for  
Death hath told you more  
Than the melancholy world doth know.’

ALEX. SMITH.

AFTER Mr. Cairns’s departure, the day passed very slowly for Darcy, and it was with a feeling of relief that he saw the shadows grow deeper over the valley, blotting out the glories of the garish sun. He was sitting outside watching the twinkling lights in the farmhouses beneath him. The moon had just risen, and was mounting gradually higher in the heavens, now and then dipping into masses of clouds. He watched it for some time. At length its path for a long distance was unobscured by clouds, and it shone out with vigour. Darcy’s eye fell on a hill which was specially favoured

by the light. After watching it intently for a few moments, he saw that it was the hill on which the graveyard was. The shadows of the beech-trees moved ghoul-like over the graves.

A sudden idea came into his head. He would go and see her grave—the grave of his wife. No sooner had he thought of it, than he started off over the country. He went with such speed that very soon he had to stop from sheer exhaustion. He went on again slower; and utterly worn out, after two hours of toil, climbing ditches and forcing his way through hedges, he reached the graveyard gate. He made for the corner where his forefathers lay, and where his uncle was buried. And there before him rose up a monument of pure white marble—emblem of the spirit whose body slept beneath—surmounted by a broken pillar, which told of the young life shattered by the fates. The moon shone brilliantly upon it, and he read—‘Erected to the memory of Grace, the beloved wife of John Darcy.’

He threw himself at the foot, and clasped the chill stone with his arms in an agony of passion. His body writhed with the groaning which cannot be uttered, till a face, a divine, calm, gracious, pitying face, seemed to look into his. Its lips seemed to move, but no sound came from them, and a white hand was stretched out as if to bless him.

‘Oh, Grace,’ he cried, ‘your life is perfected! It is mine that is shattered—mine, mine!’

She raised her hand, and stretched out her arm, pointing with her finger, while a look of hope was upon her face.

‘Yes, yes, Grace!’ he cried, ‘you are right! Is it our child, Grace—our child?’

Her head seemed to nod graciously in answer.

'Then hear me, Grace!' he exclaimed. 'By high heaven, I swear to find her!'

He looked up, but she was gone.

'Oh, Grace!' he cried, 'come back, Grace! come back!'

In vain! The breeze swept through the tree-tops with a ghostly sound, recalling him to himself.

He rose up stiff and numb with the cold, and looked about. There was a light in a house on slightly rising ground to his right. Its brilliancy attracted his attention, and he fell to wondering whose house it could be.

'I have it!' at length he exclaimed. 'I thought I remembered it. It is Father John's.' And then a sudden resolve arose in his mind. 'I shall go and see him at once,' he thought. 'What man more likely to know everything going on in the country? He may be able to give me some clue. If not, his advice will be valuable.'

Having so resolved, with great difficulty he climbed the churchyard wall and made his way to Father John's house. When he got there and knocked, the door was opened by the deaf old housekeeper, who merely pointed out the room where her master was, and left him.

Father John was sitting before the fire, with his back to the door, when he heard a rather timid knock. He cried out 'Come in,' in his most commanding tone of voice, thinking his visitor was some crouching parishioner. Darcy went in and stood breathless inside the door.

He, in truth, appeared a sorry sight, with unkempt hair and unshaven face; his clothes torn in places in

scrambling through the hedges, and soiled from contact with the ground. His face was haggard, and bore abundant signs of the mental distress he was passing through.

Father John turned slowly round and looked at him. In an instant he saw who it was. There, before him, looking so grim and terrible, panting, he supposed with hate, stood the man that he had wronged—the man whom he thought of as being thousands of miles away! He had found him out, and had come to avenge his wrongs! So thought the wily priest; and as he thought, so sudden was his surprise, his face grew livid with cowardly fear, and his limbs shook with terror.

The truth flashed instantly on Darcy's mind! He rightly construed the signs of guilt that he saw on the face before him! There, shaking with terror, stood the man who knew what had become of his daughter—of Grace's daughter!

It was certainly strange that in such an incredibly short space of time Darcy's mind followed out such a train of reasoning as led him to the conclusion that Father John was his enemy; but so it was.

With a curse on his lips, he flew at the throat of the priest and dragged him to the ground.

'My daughter, you hypocrite! my daughter! Where is she? Tell me this instant!' he exclaimed.

'Who are you,' Father John asked faintly, 'coming to assault me in my own house?'

'You know me well enough, you old sinner!' Darcy hissed. 'Where is my daughter? Tell me, or by heavens you'll never rise again!' and he pressed his thumbs into the chubby throat of the priest.

Father John was in a difficulty.

'Let me up! let me up, for the love of heaven!' he gasped, 'and I'll tell you all I know.'

'You will?' Darcy asked sternly.

'Oh yes, yes! anything, everything! only let me get up! I'm choking, Mr. Darcy! For the love of God, let me up!'

Darcy loosened his hold on his throat, but still held by the collar of his clerical coat as he pulled him on his feet. He then jerked Father John round, and putting him with his back to the wall, commanded him to tell him what he knew.

Father John took a rapid mental survey of his position. His first impulse was to shout and make a noise, so that passers-by might come to his assistance; but then, as a result of this, Darcy would most probably be arrested, and if that were done through his instrumentality, he knew well enough that he would be looked on with contempt by all men. He would not do that.

'Now then, sir,' Darcy said fiercely, 'what do you know of my child?'

'Your child was in great danger, Mr. Darcy, and I saved her, and I think you treat me very badly in return for my kindness,' Father John answered, in an injured tone of voice.

'You saved her! Did you?' Darcy answered. 'And I suppose you thought it quite unnecessary to let her father know anything of her?'

'How did I know where you were?' Father John asked.

'You knew well enough, or at any rate you could have found out, you old hypocrite!'

Darcy accompanied the last few words by shaking Father John vigorously. The latter thereupon changed his tactics.

'Oh spare me, Mr. Darcy!' he cried; 'spare me! and I'll give you all the assistance in my power. I couldn't help taking the part I did in carrying off your child. Indeed I could not! They made me do it!'

'Who made you do it?' Darcy demanded.

'Sure you know, Mr. Darcy,' he continued, 'that we unfortunate clergy of the Church of Rome have no will of our own, and we have to do what our superiors tell us. If it were left to myself I would have looked after your daughter as carefully as yourself, but they made me do it! Oh, God help us unfortunate clergy!'

Father John acted his part so well that Darcy relented and believed what he said.

'At any rate, you can do your best to help me to recover her. No one need know that you have done that.'

'But there is my oath, Mr. Darcy. You know we are sworn to secrecy—just give me a few minutes to think about it!'

Darcy took his hands off him, and let him sit down.

Father John leaned his head on his hand, and seemed absorbed in thought, while Darcy watched him expectantly.

'Yes, yes!' Father John said, slowly. 'I think it can be done.'

'You do?' Darcy exclaimed, as he caught the priest's hands in his.

'Yes, I think so, but I must see somebody first. I'll do all I possibly can for you, Mr. Darcy, but you would not expect me to break my oath.'

‘Oh, do not trifle with me!’ groaned Darcy. ‘Let me know whether you can be of any use to me!’

‘I have every hope of being able to restore your daughter to you, Mr. Darcy, and no one shall be gladder than myself when you have her with you. But I cannot be certain yet; she is in some one’s hands who might not give her up. Perhaps we might be able to bribe the party, though!’

‘Father John!’ exclaimed Darcy, impetuously, ‘you can offer as much money as you like for that purpose, only get me my child!’

‘Can I offer £100, if necessary?’

‘Offer anything. What’s money to me?’

‘Depend upon it, Mr. Darcy,’ said Father John, with as much emotion as he could assume, ‘I shall try my utmost to restore your child, but unfortunately it does not depend on me.’

‘When could you let me know whether you are successful?’ Darcy asked.

Father John thought a few minutes. ‘If you come here to-morrow night, I might know by that time. Or I could send you word, if you wish.’

‘I shall be here to-morrow night,’ Darcy said.

‘Come a little later than this,’ Father John said, ‘as I have some duties to perform to-morrow evening, and I may be out late. I sincerely hope, my poor friend,’ he continued, as he held out his hand, ‘that I shall have good news for you!’

Darcy seized his hand, shook it, and hurried out.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## INTRA MUROS.

'Shut in by self, as by a brazen wall,  
In a dry, windless court alone ;  
Where no refreshing dews of eve may fall,  
Nor morning sun has shone !'

L. MORRIS.

FATHER JOHN opened his cupboard, took a bottle from it, and poured out half a tumbler of whisky. He looked at it for a moment between his eye and the candle, then drained it off. He then took a small canister filled with tea from the cupboard, and ate a spoonful of the contents. This done, he put on his great coat and hat, and seizing a stout stick, went out into the night.

He took the road leading to the Convent of —. After walking for three quarters of an hour he rang the bell at the lodge gate. The woman who came to open it, seeing who the visitor was, made a low curtsey. Father John twirled his fingers over her, as a sign that he gave his blessing, and then asked whether Sister Bridget were any better. The woman did not know, and Father John went on.

He entered the Convent itself by a side door, and descended a flight of stairs, without seeing anyone. When he reached the top he turned to the right, and having gone a few yards, he quietly pushed open a door which led into a barely furnished room.

There was a lamp on a table in the centre, and a woman sat reading by its light. She was evidently deeply interested in the book before her. Her elbows

rested on the table, her fingers were thrust into her hair, which flowed loosely down her back. The light shone full on her face and figure, and showed the former pale, with compressed lips, majestic, and severe; the latter was rounded with perfect graceful curves.

Father John had got close beside her, and was looking at the book she read, but she did not notice him. He watched the shadows playing about her face and hair, with a strange, indefinable look on his face.

'Ah—knowledge, knowledge!' he said at length, with sanctimonious accents; 'how much hast thou to answer for in drawing away a lofty soul from the things of eternity!' The reader started. 'Don't be frightened, sister,' he said solemnly; 'I could not help thinking that your time would be much better used in joining your sisters in their religious exercises.'

'Indeed!' she said. 'When you preachers practise what you preach, I'll be religious!' and she bent her head to her book. 'How strange,' she said, after a few minutes, during which both were silent—'how strange it is to think that that moon, which shines so brightly night after night, is a dead, cold, and lifeless thing!—so they say here. It once had heat and life, but now it rides the heavens with a hypocritical glow on its face!'

'Just like some hearts, sister,' Father John remarked, as he forced a sigh.

"The cheek may be tinged by a warm sunny smile,  
While the cold heart to ruin runs darkly the while."

'What's the matter with you, Father John?' she asked. 'You seem very low-spirited to-night! Hasn't your whisky agreed with you? or don't your parishioners pay their dues to the day?'

'Ah, sister, you always are hard on me. You never will believe that I have your interest at heart. God knows I have, sister. I am sorry in my inmost soul for you!'

'I have often told you,' she said as her face grew dark, 'and I tell you now again, that I don't want your whining pity, or that of anyone else. I am quite capable of looking after myself. So you may change the subject; I have heard enough about it!'

Just then a child's cry was heard. She rose up hastily, and went into an adjoining room. In a few minutes she appeared with the child in her arms. Father John made an awkward attempt to entertain the little one, by uttering a feeble imitation of the endearing expressions which he had heard applied to children; but the child turned away from him, and hid its face in its mother's breast.

'Poor thing—poor thing!' he said, as he pulled out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes. 'It makes my blood boil to think of it!' he continued, as he struck his fist on the table.

'To think of what?' she asked defiantly.

'Oh nothing—nothing!' he said. 'It was only something I came to talk to you about to-night. But it does not matter. I don't suppose you would listen to me. But to think of it!' he exclaimed, as he walked about the room with well-feigned agitation.

She went up to him, and put her hand on his arm: 'I shall not be rude to you any more!' she said. 'Tell me what affects you so?'

'Oh the scoundrel! I almost throttled him where he stood—to hear him speak of you in the way he did! The mean coward!'

‘Of whom are you speaking?’ she asked eagerly.

‘Of whom?’ and Father John laughed a mocking laugh—‘why, Darcy, of course; Darcy the gentleman!’

‘Darcy!’ she repeated, with set teeth and clenched hands. She pressed her child closer to her bosom; her whole frame shook, and she could scarcely speak. ‘I—I thought he was in America,’ she said at length.

‘So does everybody think. But he has come all the way, and has taken the risk of being arrested; and all to find his daughter—his daughter! Not that blessed angel there—don’t think of it! You are the refuse and off-scouring of the earth, he thinks! The workhouse is too good for you both. Oh, I felt inclined to strike him down where he stood when I heard the name he called you!’

‘Oh, if you did,’ she exclaimed, ‘I would have been yours, body and soul!’

‘The worst of it is,’ Father John went on, ‘he knows that his puny daughter is here, and he will bring the country about our ears. We must give her up.’

‘No!’ she exclaimed. ‘By heavens! he will never have the gratification of going off in such triumph, if I can help it. The perjurer! Keep her here, and make her spend her life in mumbling over your prayers. I cannot wish her worse.’

‘He little thinks that he has us to deal with,’ Father John said; ‘but we will teach him to have at least some humanity in his heart. Oh, the base wretch! To think that he has got a splendid house in America, as he told me, all furnished and ready to receive his daughter! She is to be brought up in the best society

of New York—no less! She might be a princess, he has made such preparations for her!

‘Father John,’ Sister Bridget exclaimed, ‘he shall not take her! I shall upset his plans, if no one else will—the perjurer!’

‘What can we do?’ Father John asked.

‘Have him arrested,’ she said.

‘No; I thought of that. It would not do; we shall all be exposed! We must think of some other way to baffle him. Let me see——’ And Father John sat down and professed to be absorbed in thought.

Sister Bridget walked about with her now sleeping child. There was silence in the room for a considerable time. It was broken at length by Father John leaping up and exclaiming:

‘Why should not your child have the benefit of all these preparations, instead of that sickly thing? He will never know the difference, and it will be only the barest justice.’

‘Could we do it?’ she asked eagerly.

‘No doubt about it,’ he replied.

‘It would be a grand revenge!’ she said.

Sister Bridget looked intently and lovingly on her child’s face for a few moments. ‘No, baby!’ she said, ‘your unnatural father may desert you, but your mother never will! Oh, I could not leave her, Father John!’ she cried.

‘There is no need to leave her,’ he explained. ‘Don’t you see he will want a nurse to take with him. When, as the Scripture tells us, the king’s daughter adopted the child Moses, who nursed and watched over him? His own mother! And see what he became afterwards.

You have changed so much since you came here, that very few would know you to be the same person. You could, however, easily disguise yourself, so that you could watch over your child without fear.'

'Father John,' she said, as her breath came fast, 'I'll do it!'

'All I ask, sister,' he said, in solemn tones, 'is that you will try to think well of me, when you are far from this.'

'My eternal thanks are due to you, Father John,' she said feelingly.

'I hope you will forgive me for being rude to you!'

Her child woke up and began to cry, when, bidding Father John a hasty good-night, she hurried off to put it to sleep again.

Father John also left the room, and went along a tolerably long passage outside, at the end of which was a door half opened, through which opening a streak of light found its way into the darkness. He went towards it, and having reached the door, knocked gently.

A whining melancholy voice bade him come in. The voice belonged to a tall thin woman, who reclined in a most comfortable arm-chair, and looked as miserable as possible. This was the lady-superior of the convent.

'Well, sister,' Father John said, 'is your liver out of order? or have your finances got in a muddle? Which is it?'

'Ah, Father John!' she said, with a sigh, 'you little know the responsibility of such a position as mine—nothing but one continual worry!'

'What's the matter now?' he asked. 'Have those tradespeople become troublesome again?'

‘Yes, indeed!’ she replied, ‘the ungrateful wretches! We nurse them when they are sick, and offer up our prayers for them, and yet they had the impudence to-day to say that their little bills must be paid this week: that we have had too much credit already!’

‘Can you not raise some money in any way to pay them off?’

‘Not a penny, Father John!’ she whined, ‘and you know that! You induced me to carry out those improvements at the east end, and I am sure we could have done just as well without them. They have taken every shilling I had. I blame you for it all, Father John—you ought to have known better than——’

‘Would fifty pounds be of any use to you?’ Father John said, interrupting her in his blindest tone.

‘Fifty pounds!’ she exclaimed, ‘Could you give me fifty pounds? Oh, if you could, I would have prayers offered up for you morning, noon, and night!’

‘Thank you,’ he said drily, ‘I can lay up a stock of them myself when I feel inclined. But would you use your influence with your brother the bishop for me, if I get you out of the difficulty? You know it would not be the first I have taken you out of!’

‘Indeed, you have always been a good friend to me,’ she said.

‘You know I have coveted to be an archdeacon,’ he continued, ‘and if you promise to influence your brother in my favour, you may depend on me to get you free from your difficulties.’

‘I will do my best—indeed I will!’ she answered.

‘Very well, then,’ he said, ‘listen to me,’ and he pulled his chair near hers. ‘Mr. Darcy has come from America.’

'Oh, worse and worse!' she exclaimed, wringing her hands. 'That's another thing you have brought on me! We shall all be disgraced; I know we shall. I told you that no good could come of it! You know I did!'

'Woman!' said Father John sternly, 'don't be a fool. If you want me to get you out of your difficulties, listen to me, and don't go on in that manner.'

'Oh, forgive me, Father John,' she pleaded, 'I'll not interrupt you again—indeed I will not!'

'Very well, then. Darcy is here and wants his daughter. He will be sure to find out where she is, and it would be better for us to give her up quietly and let him take her away. What do you think?'

'Oh yes, yes,' she replied; 'let him take her at once!'

'We shall do no such thing,' Father John continued, with a grin of superiority. 'Is it likely that I have taken all that trouble for nothing? Bring her up properly, and one day this place will reap the benefit.'

'But you said that he wants her,' she jerked out hesitatingly.

Father John smiled.

'He may want her,' he said, 'but he shall not get her.'

'I do not understand what you mean at all,' she said helplessly.

'Don't you see?' he went on; 'here you have Sister Bridget and her child—both sure to be a drag on you, for her money cannot last long. That brother of hers is squandering the estate at a furious rate. Give him her child instead—it's his too, for that matter.'

'But will she consent?' the lady-superior asked, as she grew more interested in what Father John said.

'Consent? Of course she will! I've managed that. She is going as a nurse to take care of the child, to watch Darcy bring it up in the best society, and to inherit his riches when he dies! But won't she be disappointed!' and Father John chuckled with satisfaction at the thought. 'He cannot live long,' Father John continued, 'and when he goes you see we shall have his lawful daughter here all the time; of course, *she* will inherit his money! And, as I have said before, you have only to bring her up properly and the money is yours! You'll have no more trouble about money matters—believe me!'

'Well, well, Father John, you know more about these matters than I do—I leave it all to you. You have been a good friend to me, and I know I can trust you not to do anything that would bring disgrace on us.'

'Oh, you may depend on me!' he said, as he rose to go.

'But you promised to get me out of these tradesmen's hands!' she said, detaining him. 'You know you did.'

'Well, well,' he said, petulantly, 'how much did I say?'

'Fifty pounds, and that will only put them off for a time! Oh! they will be the death of me! We're going to ruin, I know we are!'

'Come, come,' Father John said encouragingly. 'You must not give way like this. Have Sister Bridget and the child in readiness the night after next, and every penny of your debts will be paid by me!'

'Oh! God bless you, God bless you, Father John!'

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she exclaimed, as she wiped her eyes for joy. 'You have taken a load off my mind. I shall now be able to attend to my duties with a light heart! She will be ready, never fear!'

Father John bade her good-night, and hurried home. There was a thoroughly satisfied look on his face as he sat before the fire that night, with his long pipe in his mouth and his glass of punch in his hand.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### HOPE.

'Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief.'

COWPER.

THE next night Darcy arrived punctually at Father John's. He had sent a note to Mr. Cairns by Micky, telling him not to advertise till he heard from him. He was excited in speech and manner when he took a seat opposite Father John.

'Well!' he asked nervously, 'what have you to tell me? Is—is—the news good or bad?'

'I am sincerely glad,' Father John said, with the blindest of smiles, 'to be able to tell you that you will probably very soon have your child in your arms.'

'Oh, my friend!' Darcy exclaimed, 'the thought is too much for me! Soon did you say? Let me know all about it! I'll never forget your kindness, never!'

'The pleasure of having restored her to you will repay me for all my trouble. It will, indeed,' Father John said, with apparent feeling. 'And now,' he con-

tinued, 'if you will listen, I will tell you what I know of the matter.'

'Yes, yes! let me hear it! I'll be quiet, Father John! Tell me all about it!'

'Certain people,' Father John began, 'who, whatever you may think, were your truest friends, saw that where your child was she was in great danger. They found out that some unprincipled ruffians had determined to steal her, in order to gain a ransom for her, so they put her in a safe place, where no one could possibly reach her to do her harm. She has been brought up with the greatest care, and is as strong and healthy as a child can be.'

'Oh! bless you for all that!' Darcy exclaimed.

'She has had a nurse specially to look after her, to whom I must say the child is very much attached.'

'Do you think I could get her to come with us?' Darcy asked, eagerly.

'I am not quite sure,' Father John replied. 'But I could see about it. These people,' he went on, 'have been at some expense, as you may see, but they do not ask any recompense for that.'

'They will not be at any loss through me; you may tell them that,' Darcy said emphatically.

'I have told them that,' Father John continued, 'but they have refused any remuneration.'

'But I must do something for them,' Darcy persisted.

'Well, this is all they want,' and Father John pulled a paper out of his pocket. 'They want you to sign this paper, in which you promise never to hold them to account for detaining your daughter. And also, that if

they should be prosecuted by the authorities for aiding you, as a man for whom there is a reward offered at the present moment, that you would pay the costs of the trial.'

'Of course I would do that!' Darcy exclaimed.

'But you may forget,' Father John continued, 'that you would in all probability be far away, if such a thing occurred, or if anything happened to you, they would have to bear the whole brunt themselves. So they ask you to do what I think is very reasonable—to deposit £500 in my hands, to be applied for the purpose specified, if such a thing should happen, and if after a certain time it was plain that the authorities had not heard of your being here, the money would of course be refunded.'

'Is that all?' Darcy asked.

Father John nodded.

'It is very reasonable indeed!' Darcy said; 'very reasonable! If I succeed in getting away, my friend, you may be sure that anything I can do for those who have helped me will be done.'

'I have no doubt of it,' Father John assented.

Darcy pulled out a pocket-book, and filling in a cheque for £500, handed it to Father John, who scanned it carefully, to see whether it were in proper form. Much to his satisfaction Darcy did not ask for a receipt or any acknowledgment of the cheque. Darcy's mind, in truth, was in too dreamy a state for business matters.

'I can scarcely believe it, Father John,' he said. 'It all seems so strange! To think that I shall clasp my child in my arms! The child of my wife!—of Grace! Oh, Father John, you little know what she was to me! Nobody can know it! Grace! Grace!' and

he bowed his head on his hands. 'I never believed in a heaven, Father John, till I knew her! Never believed in anything! But she is gone! Why did she die, Father John? That's what I want to know! Was there a better woman anywhere? Had she done anything wrong? You ought to know these things. Can't you tell me? No! none of you know! You preach and you talk, the whole pack of you, and what do you know? Why did she die? That's what I want to know!' and he shook his fists in the priest's face.

'Calm yourself, calm yourself, Mr. Darcy,' Father John said; 'you must remember her daughter is alive, and that is something to be thankful for.'

'You are right, you are right,' Darcy said. 'Forgive me, Father John,' he continued, 'I—I am very foolish!'

'Oh, not at all,' Father John said, 'you are all right! But you must try and keep yourself calm, so that we may be able to carry out our plans.'

'When did you say I should see her?'

'Well, perhaps she could be ready the night after next. If you come here again to-morrow night, I could have certain information, and in the meantime you could make whatever arrangements it may be necessary to make for her conveyance to the place you intend to start from!'

'Very well, my friend, it shall be as you wish; I must go now, as I have no time to spare.'

Bidding Father John good-night, he hurried out and went quickly to his temporary residence.

Once there, he asked Mrs. Molloy if she thought it would be too late for Micky to take a letter to Mr. Cairns.

‘Och dhin! Divil a bit, yer honour!’ she replied; ‘I’ll send Micky at wanst!’

Darcy quickly wrote a note, telling his friend of his good luck, and asking him to come up on the morrow. This he gave to Mrs. Molloy, who hurried her husband off with it. There was no sign on Micky’s face to show whether he liked this night’s walk or not; one thing was patent to Darcy, and that was that Mrs. Molloy had quite succeeded, by a way of her own, in thoroughly imbuing her better half with the doctrine of passive obedience.

That night Darcy’s sleep was fitful. Several times he woke suddenly from some hideous dream, and each time, with a faint smile at his own imagination, laid his weary head down again on the pillow. His mind was filled with wandering and weird thoughts, not one of which he could hold for a minute to examine it more closely. He had his longest sleep towards morning, but when he awoke from it and raised himself on his elbow to look about him, he felt twinges of pain in his limbs, but took little notice of them. He dressed himself with some difficulty and left his room.

There was a note from Mr. Cairns in reply to his.

‘I will come up without delay,’ it said.

When Darcy had finished his breakfast and was sitting before the cosy fire, his thoughts became brilliantly coloured as the flames before him.

‘How near I am to this great happiness,’ he thought. ‘What a joy it will be to have my daughter in my arms and far away from these troubles, to watch her day by day grow up to womanhood! To watch her becoming more and more like Grace! Yes, I shall call her Grace,’ he

mused, 'and some night, when the logs burn brightly in our house, I shall draw her to me and tell her of her mother. How her little heart will beat! How mine will beat to see Grace's eyes looking at me through hers!'

Thus he sat and thought for a considerable time. He was aroused from his reverie by Mrs. Molloy's child, who had been asleep in its cradle, beginning to cry. Darcy ran to it, and taking it out of its cradle, fondled it till it was calmed, much to the pleasure and astonishment of Mrs. Molloy.

In the afternoon Mr. Cairns arrived, and Darcy told him how Father John had been so kind to him, and how he would probably receive his daughter the next night.

Mr. Cairns congratulated Darcy. It was sure to be all right, he said, as Father John had said so. He promised that a carriage would be in readiness to take Darcy and his child to the coast, where one of his ships would be waiting for them. Darcy was to send him word that night by Micky where the carriage was to go.

Mr. Cairns was a man who put himself to great inconvenience in showing kindness to Darcy, yet his favours were bestowed in a manner which seemed designed to make the receiver think as lightly of them as possible. Notwithstanding this, Darcy was truly grateful to him, and showed his thankfulness by every means in his power.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## REALISATION.

‘Faithful remembrances of one so dear.’

COWPER.

WHILE they were settling their plans, Father John was at the convent, seeing that everything was being prepared. That night Darcy was overjoyed by being told that he would certainly receive his child on the following night, and that Father John had succeeded in inducing the child’s nurse to be in readiness to go with it and take care of it.

‘The child is now at the convent,’ he said, ‘and the lady-superior feels that it has been in answer to her prayers that she is enabled to restore the child to its father.’

Darcy could not find words to express his thankfulness for the kindness he had met with. As he grasped the priest’s hand in bidding good-night, his eyes filled with tears, and with a simple ‘God bless you,’ he hurried out.

His mind was not in a proper condition to search out and sift the statements of the wily priest. He took them all without a question; for who doubts to put faith in what flatters his wishes? On reaching the mountain he sent Micky with a letter containing all the particulars to Mr. Cairns. He was to meet the carriage at a certain point in the road at eleven o’clock the following night, when they would drive to the convent, where the child and her nurse would be awaiting him.

Darcy passed another restless night. The same ugly dreams attacked him whenever he closed his eyes. When in the morning he tried to get up, he felt racking pains throughout his limbs, which make him distort his features with pain. After struggling in vain to dress himself, he was forced to call in Micky to his aid, who in his clumsy way did his duties.

When Darcy had moved about a little, he felt much better. The day passed very slowly, but a few hours' sleep, which came upon him in the evening as he sat by the fire, helped to pass the time. When he awoke he found it was within an hour of the time at which he was to meet the carriage. This just left him time to have some tea, which Mrs. Molloy in her kindness persisted in making for him. She also, before letting him go, produced a black bottle containing whisky, from which she poured out a glassful, declaring at the same time that if "his honour" would drink it she would know that he thought well of them. He, seeing that it would hurt her feelings if he refused, drank the liquor with as good a grace as possible. Micky was ordered to see "his honour" part of the way, and it was well that he did, for when Darcy got out into the damp night air, he began to feel aches similar to those he had experienced in the morning. The farther he went the worse they grew, till at length he had to lean on Micky, and limp along as best he could. When they reached the appointed place the carriage was waiting.

'Hallo! here you are at last!' said Mr. Cairns's cheery voice. 'What is the matter?' he asked anxiously, when he saw Darcy limping along.

'Oh, nothing but a touch of rheumatism!' the latter replied. 'It came on when I left the house.'

'Had you much conversation with Micky?' Mr. Cairns asked, in a jocular manner, when they were seated in the carriage, for his object was to keep Darcy's spirits up.

'No, I cannot say that I had,' Darcy replied, in a dreamy fashion.

'I thought so,' Mr. Cairns continued. 'In fact, I never knew anyone that had much conversation with him. I have often tried myself to get him to talk, but I could not at any time get much more than a "yes," or "no," out of him. I suppose he reserves all his remarks for Mrs. Molloy. There is one thing certain about him, and that is, that he never by any chance tells a secret. I knew you would be quite safe with him. He is a very queer character indeed, and as for Mrs. Molloy, you had a touch of her quality yourself!'

'How long will it take us to get there?' Darcy asked.

It was evident from his question where his thoughts were.

'Oh, not more than a quarter of an hour. We shall go to the coast the other way, as it is nearer. Round by Sir Robert's, you know. I have ordered the captain to tack about outside the bay, and to keep a look-out for a red light along the shore. As soon as he sees it he will send a boat to take you off!'

'We are putting you to great inconvenience, I fear,' Darcy said; 'but I hope one day to be able to show my gratitude for your great kindness.'

'Oh, nonsense!—don't think about it, Mr. Darcy. My ship would be going out, in any case, and it's no extra trouble whatever to take one or two passengers.'

A few minutes later the wheels of the carriage entered on the smooth avenue to the convent, and both men were silent. A few minutes more, and the coach was drawn up. Darcy looked eagerly out of the window, only to see a black building before him. There was neither light nor life about it. A short period of painful suspense ensued, and then a door was heard to creak on its hinges and two figures came through it; the one a man, the other a woman. The latter carried the child, wrapped carefully up from the cold. The man turned out to be Father John, who came to the carriage-window.

‘I have kept my word, Mr. Darcy,’ he said, ‘and believe me that I never had a happier moment in my life than this!’

Darcy had no inclination to listen to the mincing words of the priest. Stretching out his arms, he pushed Father John on one side, as he murmured, ‘My child, my child!’

Father John was slightly astonished; but quickly recovering himself, he put his hand on the nurse’s arm, ‘Come, my good woman,’ he said, ‘get in.’

She seemed to hesitate for a moment. It was only for a moment, however; for in the next, with a firm step, she entered the carriage.

‘Give him the child,’ Mr. Cairns said, ‘and sit beside me.’ The woman did as she was bid.

Father John heard the stranger’s voice in the carriage, and, thrusting in his head, said:

‘I should have liked, Mr. Darcy, to see you safely on board; but as you have someone else with you, perhaps I ought not to follow out my intention.’

Darcy did not answer him.

'Let me introduce myself, Father John,' said Mr. Cairns. 'My name is Cairns. My friend is too much wrapped up in his happiness to hear what you said. I am sure, however, he would be glad of your company. We can make room here quite well.'

'Not at all, not at all!' Father John replied. 'I'm rather bulky to get in there; I'll go on the box.' So saying, he closed the door and got up beside the driver.

As they went along, Darcy, with his child pressed close to him, was all unconscious of those about him. He now and again murmured, in a heart-satisfied way, 'My darling, my darling!'

Mr. Cairns felt the woman by his side shiver a few times. At last he asked her if she were cold, as he spread his rug over her. She answered him, in a hesitating way, 'No.'

The night was dark, but yet the horses were going on at a rapid pace. There was silence in the carriage. Darcy, with a happy smile on his face, looked down on the sleeping child, whose little heart beat next his own. Rose Clements, with a scowl on her face, watched him from behind a large pair of spectacles and from under a large cap. Once or twice a smile passed over her face, for what mother could look on unmoved while her babe was made so much of? The smile, however, was soon suppressed, for other thoughts would arise.

'He thinks it is hers!' she thought. 'How pleased, how gratified he seems! He never gives a thought to me—never! But I'll have my revenge for this: he little knows what a dupe he is!'

She was aroused from such thoughts by Mr. Cairns,

who, pointing to a light in front of them, asked her whether that were not where Sir Robert Grant lived. Before she could think whether it would be wise for her to answer the question or not, she had said 'Yes,' mechanically. Mr. Cairns kept watching the light as they went along: it was something to occupy his thought in such silent company.

Suddenly, when they had got abreast of the light, a terrific crash was felt. The coachman shouted, the horses plunged!—the carriage was felt to fall down on one side, and all those in it were thrown in a heap together.

The nurse was the first to recover herself. As she did so, she snatched the child, which was now crying, from Darcy's arms, and, holding it safely in her own, covered its face with kisses. The coachman and Father John had both fallen off, but were unhurt. The coachman rushed to the horses' heads, while Father John cut the traces and other straps which bound the frightened animals to the broken carriage. He then ran to the window, and saw Rose with the child in one arm, supporting herself with the other, and Mr. Cairns lifting up Darcy from the floor, while the latter moaned with pain.

'Is there anything broken, Mr. Darcy?' Father John asked.

'No, no; it is merely that rheumatism that has attacked me again!' They, however, were forced to carry him out of the carriage, as he was quite helpless.

The gate-house to Sir Robert's was close at hand, and thither they brought him, and placed him in an arm-chair by the smouldering fire, after they had aroused the sleeping inmates.

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At the first opportunity, Father John took Rose on one side: 'Is it all right?' he asked, with terrible earnestness—'does he know anything?'

'You need not trouble yourself,' she answered quietly; 'he knows nothing.'

Mr. Cairns and Sir Robert's coachman, who lived at the gate-house, went out with lamps to see the extent of the damage. They found that some lazy or indifferent person had left a cart on the roadside, and that the wheel of the carriage, having caught in it, was broken to pieces.

Mr. Cairns sent his coachman, who by this time had succeeded in quieting the horses, with all haste to bring another vehicle in which the journey could be resumed. Having done this, he re-entered the lodge.

Sir Robert's coachman thought it his duty to tell his master of the accident; so, without letting any one know, he went to the house for that purpose.

Darcy was sitting before the fire when Mr. Cairns went in. The nurse, with the child, sat behind him. Father John was talking to Darcy. The coachman's wife was putting more fuel on the fire.

'I have sent for another conveyance,' Mr. Cairns said, 'and I expect it here in an hour, at the most; so you must all try to make yourselves comfortable till then.'

Father John's face brightened up: 'I shall get them off at last,' he thought, with satisfaction.

'You are very considerate, my friend,' Darcy said. 'I shall tell my daughter when she grows up of your kindness. Where is she?' he asked, turning his head round painfully.

'Oh, she is all right,' Father John replied; 'just gone to sleep again; and perhaps it would be better not to awake her.'

'True, true,' Darcy said, musingly; 'she is not hurt, is she?' he asked, after a pause.

'Not in the least,' Mr. Cairns replied; 'your good nurse snatched her just in time out of your arms, or she might have been.'

'I'll not forget you, nurse,' Darcy said; 'you will indeed be a help to me, when we get to America.' A frown came on the nurse's face as he spoke.

'Do you feel better now?' Father John asked.

'Oh, much better,' Darcy said, 'before this fire. The pain is not so great.' Yet between each few words he had to pause and catch his breath, and a sudden twinge of agony shot through his frame.

As they talked on, now of one thing, now of another, the latch of the door was raised gently; Sir Robert stood on the threshold. Rose turned her head to look at him. What a flood of recollections his hale, kind face, called up! Before her passed the hunting field, where she was queen of the chase! There were the same tender eyes, which had so often looked earnestly at her, as if warning her and pitying her. She turned her head away, and a tear trickled down her cheek as she looked on the child in her lap. She wiped it away indignantly, however, and sat like a statue.

Sir Robert looked around at the different people. 'Hallo, Father John,' he exclaimed. 'You here! Why did you not come up to the house at once?'

Father John was for the moment thunderstruck.

'Lost! lost!' he thought. For was not this a magis-

trate who knew Darcy? And here was a priest aiding and abetting a traitor! He quickly recovered his self-possession, and answered: 'We did not wish to disturb you at this time of night, as we had sent for another carriage to take us on.'

Sir Robert walked over to the fireplace. 'I wish you had brought your friends up, Father John,' he said.

He turned and looked at Darcy, when he had spoken. He started with astonishment. 'My God! Darcy, is it you?' he exclaimed. 'What madness has brought you here?'

'My child,' Darcy answered quietly.

'Your child! God knows I have tried hard to find her out and restore her to you, not only for your own sake, but for that of your wife—that blessed soul that has gone away from among us! How can you expect to have any better success? It is madness and nothing less for you to come here on such an errand!'

'The child is here,' Mr. Cairns said.

'The child here!' Sir Robert exclaimed.

'Yes,' Darcy said, with difficulty. 'I have found her, and only for this accident we should have been on the sea by this time, and on our way back.'

'Well! well!' Sir Robert said, musingly. 'But what am I standing here for?' he exclaimed, suddenly. 'Come to the house, all of you, and I'll send my carriage with you!' and he took Darcy by the arm.

An exclamation of pain broke from Darcy.

'God bless my soul!' Sir Robert exclaimed, 'you are ill, Darcy! What a fool I was not to see it! Did none of you know it?' he asked, looking round at them.

'Mr. Darcy complained of rheumatism, that was all,' Mr. Cairns replied.

'All!' exclaimed Sir Robert. 'Here, Jane!' he said to the coachman's wife, 'get me a blanket, and one or two shawls.'

Jane brought them.

'Come, help me, Father John, to wrap him up. Jane, call Thomas to help us to carry him!'

Darcy protested. 'You know I must get away,' he began.

'I know that very well,' Sir Robert interrupted; 'but God bless my life, you must not go in this state! No one need know that you are in my house. I can keep you for a month, if necessary; but when you do go, you shall go in a proper condition. Here, you women, you ought to know how to wrap these things round him! Put the child on the bed, nurse, and lend a hand!'

The nurse did as she was bid, but her hands shook so that Sir Robert said: 'My good woman, you are shivering with cold! Warm yourself by the fire, and we will manage this ourselves. Now then, Thomas,' he continued, 'tie the two ends of the shawl round your waist. There, that will do. Now, gentlemen, lend a hand!' and they lifted Darcy on to the coachman's back.

'Very good!' Sir Robert went on. 'Now, turn the shawls up over him, and tie the other ends together round Thomas. Now the other shawl, Jane. That's right. Wrap it round him. Now off you go, Thomas. I'll be after you in a minute. Come along, gentlemen. Wrap that child up well, nurse!'

Sir Robert, when he had left the house, turned back again for a few minutes.

‘Remember,’ he said to Jane, ‘not a word about what you have seen to-night. The consequences might be very serious for me, if you speak of it!’

‘Throth, I’d rather have my eye plucked out than harm a hair av yer head, God bless you!’ she replied.

He then hurried after the others.

In the meantime Father John had whispered to Rose, ‘Keep your heart up! everything is going on well. If he dies your daughter will be the heiress. Think of that! Don’t be so nervous! I thought you were braver than all that!’

Rose had not said a word in reply. She merely pressed her babe closer, and walked on faster.

Sir Robert soon overtook them, and in a few minutes they reached his house.

‘How fortunate it was that I had not gone to bed!’ he said. ‘You might have gone away without even bidding me the time of day! Come along, Thomas. This way,’ and he led to a room—his own, but they did not know it—in which a bright fire burned, ‘There! put him to bed. I dare say you will be better in the morning. You must not trouble yourself in any way, my friend; you will be quite safe here. I will not talk to you now—you must sleep!’ and Sir Robert arranged the bed-clothes about him.

‘Sir Robert,’ Darcy said in a weak voice. Sir Robert bent down his head. ‘Were you at *her* funeral?’

Sir Robert was surprised and stared Darcy in the face for a few moments. He saw that there was an anxious look upon it. ‘Yes,’ he replied; ‘I am proud to be able to say that I was there.’

Then the weak voice spake again, 'Tell me about it,' it said.

Sir Robert drew a chair to the bedside, and told him how the sun shone brilliantly, and how the birds sang on that day, as if it were a sin to be mournful when such a spirit was released from the prison of this earth. How all the gentry of the country followed the bier reverently; how the farmers left their crops ungathered, and came in hundreds; how even the poorest of the poor helped to swell the ever-increasing procession as it went along; how the minister rose to a height of eloquence which he never before or since attained, and how a blessed influence for good seemed to be spread abroad by her death.

He told how men who had quarrelled came to be friends that day; how Paddy Brady, the most drunken ruffian in the county, had since that day settled down into a peaceable and industrious farmer.

A happy look came into the haggard face as Sir Robert, enamoured of his subject, talked on and on. At length he ceased. 'I must leave you now,' he said gently; 'you must try and sleep.'

'My child!' Darcy said.

'Oh, the poor thing must be very tired. I will put her nurse and her in the room next to this. You will see her in the morning.'

'Very well,' Darcy said. He felt a sense of rest which he had not experienced for many a day.

Sir Robert had not gone many minutes before he was asleep.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## PURGATORY.

‘Dost know  
This thirst as I, and see as I the cool  
Lymph drawn from thee, and mock thy lips ?’  
L. MORRIS.

WHEN Sir Robert went downstairs, he told Mr. Cairns and Father John that he would let them know on the morrow whether Darcy were better. Both agreed, of course, with him, that Darcy ought not to go till he was fit to endure the voyage. In a short time Mr. Cairns' carriage was announced, and he and Father John left. When they had gone Sir Robert went to see the nurse.

‘My good woman,’ he said, ‘I am sorry that I have not any special accommodation for the child, but my housekeeper will make you both as comfortable as possible. Mr. Darcy asked after the little one, and I told him you would sleep in the next room to his; so in the morning, when you hear that he is awake, will you take the child to him?’

‘Yes,’ she replied, tremblingly. He noticed that she trembled, and in his kind manner asked whether she were shaken by the accident?

‘A little!’ she replied, glad of an excuse. Immediately he rang the bell, and ordered his housekeeper to bring her some refreshments. He bade her a kind good-night, and left her with the housekeeper.

Rose ate but very little, and answered in monosyllables to the questions of her somewhat talkative companion. After a time the housekeeper, being offended

at her silence, ceased her questions, and told her with as much show of authority as she could assume, to follow her, and she would show her where she was to sleep.

What a blessed relief it was when Rose found herself alone. She kissed her babe over and over again with passionate earnestness, and when with trembling hands she had put it to bed, she threw herself by its side, and with her head, with its long beautiful hair scattered about, laid upon her arm, she sank into a troubled sleep.

She dreamed that she had set out on a long journey, through perilous places, and by a difficult road. She walked on till she felt weary, but when she tried to rest she could not; some invisible force hurried her ever on. No rest! no stopping! It was a terrible feeling! From this dream she awoke with a sigh. Once more she fell into a sleep, and once more the weary journey was renewed. Again and again she woke; again and again she slept, each time repeating the wearisome dream.

The light was beginning to shoot through the windows when she slept for the last time. And this time a dream more horrid than the other assailed her! Her hair, her long, dark, beautiful hair, she thought became a brood of serpents, which twined and hissed about her. They clambered over her body; and, dreadful thought, she felt their slimy touch upon her face.

She woke, trembling with terror, to find her child playing with her hair, and dragging it over her face with its chubby little hands.

'Thank God! thank God!' she exclaimed, as she caught the babe in her arms and covered its face with kisses.

She then looked curiously about the room, and remembered where she was. A dark shadow and a firm resolve settled on her face. She listened. There were noises in the house and in the next room. Soon she heard a knock at her door, and quickly putting on her cap and spectacles, she went to answer it. It was a servant, who told her that Sir Robert wished her to bring the child to the next room. She closed the door, and stood for a few moments irresolute whether she should obey this order or not.

Just then her child held out its arms towards her. She ran and kissed it. 'Yes, darling!' she murmured. 'I'll do it, for your sake!'

So saying, she took up the child, and with a brave step went into the next room.

There was a stranger with Sir Robert, who stood at the foot of the bed, looking very grave. He came forward, and taking the child from Rose, placed it beside Darcy.

'See, Mr. Darcy,' he said, 'here is your child come to see you!'

Darcy turned his head, and a smile lit up his countenance.

Then Rose saw his full face by the light for the first time. She started with amazement! Could that be he? That Darcy? The young, the vigorous, the handsome Darcy, who had won all hearts by his graces! Her first thought was one of intense satisfaction at his condition, but gradually, as she watched him lying there almost incapable of moving hand or foot, gentle pity stole into her heart. 'How he must have suffered!' she thought. A tear trembled on her eyelid, which she dare not wipe away.

The doctor, for the stranger was he, gave the child back to her again.

'Whenever he asks for the child take it to him,' he said, in a low tone, and bidding them good-morning, he left the room.

'What does he say is the matter with me?' Darcy asked of Sir Robert, in a somewhat impatient manner. 'When can I leave this?'

'My dear fellow,' Sir Robert replied, in a soothing way, 'why are you in such a hurry to leave? You are quite safe here. You need rest, my friend.'

'Rest!' Darcy said, after him, in a hopeless kind of way.

'Rest! Yes, Mr. Darcy,' said Sir Robert, earnestly; 'there is no use in disguising the fact that you have a severe attack of illness, and that your recovery depends on rest and quietness. You must try not to trouble about anything. Believe me, you are quite safe here, and when you get well, I have no doubt but that I shall succeed in seeing you safely off. So you must keep up your spirits.'

'Thank you, I'll try,' Darcy said, in as hopeless a voice as before.

'We shall leave you now,' Sir Robert went on, 'perhaps you may be able to sleep.'

'Perhaps!' Darcy repeated.

Sir Robert beckoned to the nurse, who followed him silently. When they were outside of the room he said, in a low voice, 'Look into the room by-and-by, and see if he wants anything. Ring this bell if he does, and tell the servant to bring it up. You'll remember.'

What a silent nurse she was! She merely answered, 'Yes.'

Sir Robert went downstairs. Rose turned into her room, where she began to wash and dress her child. The little one's innocent mirth and prattle contrasted strangely with the mother's gloomy silence. After a time the child seemed to become imbued with her spirit, for it sat on the floor and amused itself with a feather in a subdued wondering manner, while the mother sat looking dreamily out of the window.

How long she sat thus she knew not, but when she at length turned round, lo! her child lay asleep on the floor, with the feather clutched in its hand, and with a smile upon its face. She raised it up gently, and put it into bed; then, after kissing it softly, she stood and listened.

There was no sound from the other room. But she had promised to go, and with a hesitating step she went forward. She stood on the threshold of his door for a few moments with a palpitating heart, then quietly turned the handle and went in. He was awake and heard her:

'Where is the child?' he asked.

She hesitated before replying, fearing that he might discover her by her voice.

'She is asleep,' she answered. He showed no signs that he knew the voice, and she, emboldened by this, asked: 'Is there anything you want, sir?'

'No, no,' he said; 'I think not.' Then after a pause: 'You might move this pillow. It is uncomfortable!'

With gentle hands she raised his head, and arranged the pillows.

'Thank you, thank you,' he said, between his moans,

for even the slightest motion of having his head raised produced great pain.

‘May I bathe your face?’ she asked, growing bolder. ‘I think it would refresh you.’

‘Yes,’ he faintly said.

She got some tepid water, and with a gentle touch bathed his forehead, eyes, and mouth.

‘You are right,’ he said: ‘it is refreshing.’

Suddenly there was a cry from the next room: ‘The child!’ she exclaimed, as she went quickly towards the door.

‘Bring her in,’ he said.

As soon as the little one got in its mother’s arms the cry ceased. There was safety there. She brought the child into Darcy’s room, and held it down for him to kiss. His face was lit up with joy as he looked on his daughter.

‘Do you think she is like me, nurse?’ he asked.

This was an unexpected question.

‘Yes, very like!’ she answered.

‘Do you know, nurse,’ he went on, ‘that I always expected to find her like her mother; I wish she were like her mother. Don’t you think it would have been better if she were?’

A sigh escaped from the nurse.

He looked up and saw the tears running down her face. ‘What is the matter, my good woman?’ he asked, hurriedly. ‘Have I said anything? Have I done anything to hurt you? What is the matter?’

The past came back to her with its all-powerful force! She tore off her disguise! ‘Oh, Darcy!’ she cried, ‘do you not know me? Have you forgotten me?’

He knew her! In an instant his face was distorted with passion. 'Know you!' he shrieked. 'Forget you! You have been my curse! Every pleasure has been made bitter as gall with your face poisoning it! You have haunted me everywhere with your malignant frown! Here! Take this bastard away! You have had your revenge! Blast you!'

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CHAPTER XXXIX.

HE SAID, 'PEACE BE STILL'

'Was this ship stored,  
And sent forth glorious only to enrich  
The wasteful waves?'

ALEX. SMITH.

'For every dawn that breaks, brings a new world,  
And every budding bosom a new life.'

L. MORRIS.

SHE snatched up the child and rushed out of the room. Hastily laying down the child in the next room, she took up a shawl, threw it over her head, and dashed down the stairs and out of the house.

One of the servants saw a woman leaving the house in a strange manner, and went at once to tell her master. Sir Robert immediately hurried upstairs and went into Darcy's room. There a sad sight met his view, for, tossing about with groans and shrieks of pain and oaths, lay his friend.

'For God's sake, Darcy,' Sir Robert exclaimed, 'what has made you like this?—be calm, my friend, be calm!'

But Darcy answered him not. He was in a purgatory, tormented and torn asunder by bodily and mental

anguish. Sir Robert saw that his words were useless. He hastened downstairs, and sent a servant on horse-back for the doctor, and then went back and watched with moist eyes the sad spectacle. Now and again he tried to attract Darcy's attention, but all his attempts were in vain.

The doctor lost no time in answering Sir Robert's summons. When he came, Darcy was quieter. He was not in the room, however, many minutes before another paroxysm of rage came on. The doctor was puzzled.

'You must keep quiet, Mr. Darcy,' he said, in as a stern a voice as he could command—'or this may be fatal. Mark what I say. Your only hope is in quietness.' But he paid not the slightest attention.

'I fear it will soon be all over,' the doctor whispered to Sir Robert. 'I cannot do him any good. A clergyman might be of more use.'

Sir Robert went close to the bed.

'Darcy,' he said, in a tremulous voice, 'listen to me. There is a clergyman coming to stay with me to-night. He is a man who has spent his life where misery abounds. Should you wish to see him?'

Then Darcy answered for the first time; his voice was bitter and harsh: 'Curse them all!' he hissed—'the hypocrites! They never came near me but to beg, the leeches! Curse them—curse them—curse them!'

Sir Robert wiped his eyes, and stood by the doctor in silence.

And down there at the front door was Father John.

'How is the gentleman upstairs?' he asked of the servant.

'Worse to-day, sir,' the servant replied; 'the doctor had to be sent for in a hurry. He and Sir Robert are upstairs now.'

There was a gratified smile on Father John's face as he ascended the stairs, rubbing his hands as he went. He had spent some time in taking this other view of the case. If Darcy should die, Father John would be no loser, that was certain. 'And Sister Bridget,' he thought, 'what a fool she will be for her pains!—Ha, ha! They little know that they are working out my ends!'

He put on a sanctimonious smile when he reached the bedroom-door, and then went softly in. He professed to be greatly shocked at Darcy's condition, and, in imitation of Sir Robert, he wiped his eyes several times.

The three men remained in the room. Sir Robert sat by the bedside, the doctor stood looking out of the window, while Father John was restless, now sitting for a few minutes, then walking about. Sir Robert had taken one of Darcy's hands in his, and occasionally spoke to him; but Darcy, though now quiet, maintained an obstinate silence.

Suddenly the door was thrown open, and Rose burst in. She was panting for breath, her face was flushed, and her long hair hung disordered about her head. She had a child in her arms, and heedless of those present, at whom indeed she scarcely looked, she rushed to Darcy's bedside, and laid the child beside him.

'There!' she exclaimed, 'is that yours? Perhaps those eyes are like its mother's? Look at it, Darcy!—as God lives, she is the child of your wife!'

Rose felt a hand laid heavily on her arm, and, turning

round, she saw Father John's face with a terrible expression of rage upon it. He tried to speak, but the words would not come. She shook off his hand.

'You here?—you traitor!' she exclaimed. 'You perjured villain! I call on you, Sir Robert, to arrest him. I can swear that he is a perjurer—a traitor—a swindler! Ay, and if it be necessary, I can prove him to be an accomplice of a murderer! Won't you arrest him?—I appeal to you, sir,' she said, turning to the doctor. 'If you are a man, stop him! Don't, for God's sake, let him escape from justice!'

There was a strange wild beauty about her as she spoke which struck the doctor with awe. He moved quickly towards the priest, but the latter thought it prudent not to wait; so, turning quickly, he ran down-stairs and out into the air. He paused for a moment to try and collect his senses. His face was a study of the worst passions of human nature. He shook his fist towards the house, and started off again. He ran till he was out of breath: then he walked as fast as he could. On he went, till he came to the village. Here he made towards the barracks, and went in.

'Tell the sergeant I want to see him at once,' he said to the first policeman he saw. In a few minutes the sergeant came into the room where he was. 'Is that reward out for Darcy yet?' Father John asked.

'Yes, your reverence.'

'Get pen and paper quickly,' Father John commanded.

The sergeant did so: Father John dictated the information which should lead to the arrest of Darcy.

'Now, sir,' he said to the sergeant, in a menacing tone, 'you know where to find your man. Do your

duty, or, by heavens! I'll report you to the Castle. So saying, he went out.

It was some time before Darcy took any notice of Rose's entreaties that he would look at his child.

'Curse you!' at length he exclaimed; 'I want no more of your swindling!'

She burst into tears, and, taking the child with her, hurried into the next room.

Sir Robert and the doctor were both mystified. They felt that there was something that they could not fathom; but they remained in the room, helpless though they found themselves.

As they watched and waited, there was a noise of wheels on the gravel, and Sir Robert ran downstairs to meet his guest.

'Oh, Mr. Martin!' he exclaimed, putting away all formalities, 'come upstairs at once. A dear friend of mine is very ill: his disease is beyond the doctor, and you may do him good!' Mr. Martin threw his overcoat on one side, and followed Sir Robert upstairs and into the room. 'Mr. Darcy,' Sir Robert said, 'I hope you will speak to this clergyman.'

'Darcy?' Mr. Martin exclaimed, with astonishment. He looked on the agonised face before him. Changed as it was, he could trace the features of his former pupil. 'My God!' he groaned in agony, 'can I have had anything to do with this?'

The voice attracted Darcy's attention. He opened his eyes painfully.

'What is your name?' he asked.

'My name is Martin; do you know me?'

'You are true!' was Darcy's reply. 'Sit down.'

Sir Robert and the doctor left the room quietly.

Once more the instructor of old resumed his office. Two souls which had gone through the furnace had now met: the one with the wounds of the burning fresh and smarting; the other with them healed.

With words of deep conviction and meaning, Mr. Martin spoke of life, that great problem; of its mystery, its origin, and its object; of the grand and lasting results which accrue to the soul which takes suffering in the proper light. In short, he spoke of his own life, his own experience. Each word seemed to fill up a cleft in Darcy's yearning heart.

Sir Robert and the doctor waited anxiously for Mr. Martin's appearance. After about an hour, they heard the bedroom-door opened, and saw him come out. Both eagerly went to him.

'All is well!' he said. 'He would like to see the lady.'

Sir Robert went to her room-door and knocked. There was no answer. He knocked again; but no answer came. He opened the door quietly, and went in. Rose lay on the floor, by the bed, with her face buried in her hands. Sir Robert went to her and shook her gently.

'Miss Clements,' he said, 'Darcy wants to see you.' She rose hastily and followed him. 'Perhaps it is better for you to go in alone,' he said. She hesitated a moment, and then went in.

'Oh, Rose, forgive me!' Darcy exclaimed, when he saw her.

She rushed to his bedside, and throwing herself on her knees, seized his hand and kissed it.

'Forgive you?' she exclaimed. 'Oh, Darcy, I have nothing to forgive! Can *you* forgive me?'

'May God forgive us both!' he said fervently. 'We have sinned, Rose; God help us!'

'I know it—I know it,' she said; 'sinned and suffered!'

Then they remained for some moments in solemn silence.

At length Darcy said: 'Won't you bring them in, Rose?'

'Mine as well?' she asked.

'Yes, yes, Rose—both,' he replied.

She hurried out and brought in both-children. She held Grace's child to him first.

'Kiss her, Darcy,' she said; 'I know the difference between them—who so well as I?—kiss her.'

'She is very like her mother,' he said, with satisfaction. 'Will you grow to be true and good like your mother?' he asked, speaking to the child. 'She was good and beautiful, Rose,' he continued, as if his hearer had no interest in the matter. 'She was too good for me—far too good! If she had lived, I should have been a better man. But it is no use saying so now—no use!'

Rose bowed her head. She felt the humiliation that he should think so much of Grace and nothing of her. Yet she did not reproach him in her heart, for she felt that the preference was just. A big tear rolled down her cheek. Darcy saw it.

'Have I hurt you, Rose?' he asked eagerly. 'I am very sorry. I should not have mentioned her.'

'Oh, it is not that, Darcy,' she said. 'I know how far she is above me: it is not that!'

A spasm of physical pain made Darcy groan. 'Put

the children to bed, Rose,' he said when it had passed ; ' then come and sit by me.'

As soon as she came out, the doctor went in. ' Well, Mr. Darcy,' he said, as cheerfully as he could, ' any more pain ?'

Darcy told him that he had just had a very severe spasm across his chest. The doctor hoped he would soon be better, and went out.

' I fear it will soon be all over!' he said to Sir Robert and Mr. Martin. ' I can do nothing more than I have done ; but I will stay with you both.'

Mr. Martin went upstairs. When he got to the bedroom-door, Rose was there. ' May I come in, Darcy ?' he asked.

Darcy smiled to him. That was answer enough.

Mr. Martin went over and sat by the bedside. Night had fallen by this time, and the faint light of candles alone lit up the room. Mr. Martin saw that the time was too precious to waste in ordinary talk. Rose at first felt uneasy in his presence, but she soon saw that there was no Pharisaism in him.

He spoke of high subjects, which lifted them out of the low ways of men, and helped them to see beyond all, above all, and through all, the sure design, the far-off end for which each soul was formed. He was interrupted by the groans of Darcy. Successive shocks of pain shot through his system.

Rose grasped Darcy's hand, while Mr. Martin rang the bell, which was the signal for Sir Robert and the doctor to come up. With these came a third. It was Mr. Cairns, who had come to see Darcy, having heard

that he was no better. As soon as the pain had passed Darcy recognised him.

'Ah, my friend,' he said; 'I am glad to see you! What a happy man I am to have so many friends about me! I never thought I had so many! Thank you all! May the Almighty reward you!'

Another spasm succeeded, after which he was much weaker. He called Sir Robert feebly. The old man went to him.

'You will look after my children,' Darcy said, 'and Rose, pity her and help her!'

'I will, Darcy, I will!' Sir Robert promised, through his tears.

Then Darcy fell into a kind of doze. He suddenly awoke up out of it, and called Rose. 'I saw her then,' he said, with a strange light in his eyes. 'But she is so high in heaven! Oh, far too high for me! I can only see her in the distance—she was so good!' Then he dozed off again. He woke up a second time, and called Mr. Martin, 'I saw *Him* then!' he said. 'He is much lower down than Grace. He is moving about! He will not refuse me! Will he? You said he would not!'

'You may depend on what I said, Darcy. He will not!'

Another attack of pain came on, after which Darcy's tongue was silent. They watched him through the night, and when the first rays of the glorious morning sun shot their spikes through the shutters, his life ended like the night. With sad, yet thankful hearts, they left the room.

Sir Robert heard a sound on the gravel outside the

house. He threw open the window and looked out. 'A cordon of police around the house!' he exclaimed to the others.

'That is Father John's doing!' Rose replied.

The officer who commanded the police had his warrant ready, and everything in due form to arrest Darcy, but a stronger than the law had stepped in, and made the devices of men of none effect.

They buried him early on a glorious morning. The few friends who had been with him in death stood around the grave—his grave and the grave of his wife. Mr. Martin led Rose from the place, and with sympathetic words braced her heart for the stern duties of life. He himself went back to his difficult duties, strengthened for them. He had found the meed of duty done, and was content.

There to-day the old house stands, which has seen so much happiness and so much sorrow. There it stands awaiting its new mistress, who now, daughter-like, plays about Sir Robert's house, brightening it with her presence. May her life be the continuation of the lives of her parents, in their high strivings after the true! May she, more fortunate than they, see her hopes ripen to perfection, and may she, when sorrow comes, meet it with her mother's brave, trustful spirit, and be purified by it earlier in life than it was her father's lot to be, so that with a heart at rest she may fulfil her mother's ideal, and be a blessing to herself and a blessing to others.

## CHAPTER XL.

## A JUST BALANCE.

SIR ROBERT was too just to let such a criminal as Father John escape. He was also too generous to wish to brand a whole body with the sins of one of its ministers, which would be the case if he brought Father John to a public trial.

He drew up, instead, a statement of the case against him, and forwarded it to the bishop, with an intimation that if justice could be done without a public trial, he would be satisfied. The bishop, after satisfying himself that there were good grounds for the accusation, deprived Father John of his office.

Would you see him now? Down there in the lowest part of the town of Brigo, standing at a public-house corner, in a shabby—very shabby—black suit, may often be seen a shivering wretch; you would soon find out his name, for the members of the drunken off-scouring of society pat him familiarly on the back; and when one more generous than the rest calls out: ‘Come along, Father John! Poor divil! Throth you look shtarved to death!’ his reverence trots at his heels, and, having swallowed some fiery concoction, smacks his lips with satisfaction, and wipes his mouth with his coat sleeve.’

THE END.





